

Θεόφοβοι Θεόφιλοι :

GODS FEARERS
ARE
GODS FAVOURITES.
OR, AN

Encouragement

To fear GOD
IN

The worst TIMES.

Delivered in several Sermons, by that eminent Servant of Christ, *Nath. Tucker*, late Preacher of the Gospel in *Portsmouth*.

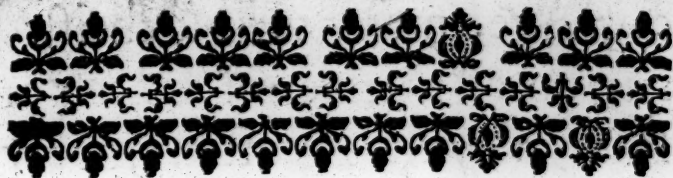
Ecclef. 8. 12. Surely, I know it shall be well with them that fear God, that fear before him.

Timor præsens securitatem generat sempiternam, August. in *Psal.*

Timenti Dominum bene erit in extremis, Bern. de *Tim. Dei*.

London, Printed by *J. C.* for *Dorman Newman*, at the Kings Armes in the Poultry, next to *Grocers-Ally*. 1662.





To the Christian

R E A D E R.

IT was the saying of *Abraham* to *Abimelech*, Gen: 20.
11. *Because I thought surely the fear of God is not in this place, they will slay me for my wifes sake.* Where the Fear of **G O D** is wanting, what Evil will not Men commit? Where this Bank is broken down, the Floods of all manner of Wickedness will flow over. Hence it is, That in

A 2 our

our Age, many turn Atheists,
run to all manner of Excess of
Riot, play the Apostates, grow
faint-hearted in the Cause of
God, are afraid of Men: and
as the *Burgundians* once were a-
fraid all the *Reeds* they saw, had
been *Launces*; so these fear e-
very thing they see, yea, their
own shadows: and all this is
for want of the Fear of God.
*Meritò omnia timet, qui illum
non timet.* It is therefore very
proper Work for us to press af-
ter this Fear. It is called, *Fa-
nitor Animæ*, The Porter to
keep out the Soul's Foes, and
to let in the Soul's Friends. It
is *Principium & Præcipuum*
Sa-

Sapientia, The Beginning and
Perfection of Wisdom; there-
fore fit to be pursued after. Re-
member that speech of the Lord
concerning *Israel*, Deut. 5. 29.
*O that there were such an heart
in them, that they would fear me.*
Shall God wish it, and shall not
men press after it? yet such is
our averfeness to that which is
good, that Precept upon Pre-
cept, and Line upon Line will
scarce perswade us.

The Reverend Author of
this ensuing Tract, hath taken
great paines to promote that
which the Lord doth so pathe-
tically wish for. Read dili-
gently therefore what is here
written

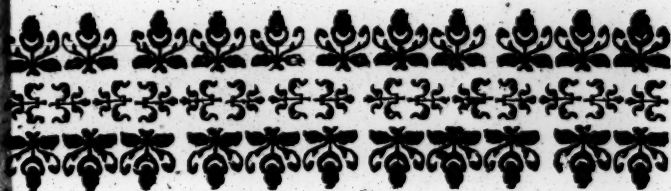
written, and thou mayst gain much by it. Here thou wilt finde some Discoveries of this Fear, some Motives to press after it, and some Helps to obtain it; all handled in a most affectionate and melting manner: and that a Blessing may go along with this Discourse, in order to thy eternal Benefit, is the desire of

*April 13.
1658.*

Thy souls well-wisher,

Richard Kentish.

An



AN
EPISTLE
To the
READER

Christian Reader,

Although my Approbation can add little weight to the worth of this ensuing Treatise ; yet being desired to shew kindness to the Dead, in giving a true Testimony to this Posthumous Piece, I could not refuse to perform such an Office of Love, as by the Rule of Love we are all obliged unto. This therefore I may truly say, That having over-viewed it, I finde nothing in it but that which is sound, holy and wholesome, fit to inform the Judgement, and to raise holy Resolutions and Affections in the Hearts of the Readers,
sweetly

sweetly breathing forth Piety in every Passage of it : so that whosoever will give it the reading over, (which will quickly be done) shall have cause not to think his Time mispent : But (if his Heart be in a right Disposition) he shall finde it hereby more stirred with desire to get to be amongst the number of those true Fearers of God, for whom, a loving Record and a Book of Merciful Remembrance shall be written for their shelter in evil Times, that they may finde Mercy in the evil day; for which times, our good God fit and prepare us all. Farewel.

Tho. Whitfeld.



MAL. 3. 16, 17, 18.

Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkned and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name.

And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare him, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Ye shall yet return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

TMust first give you some light into the context, and then come unto the words of the text:
Then they that feared the Lord.

The particle *ax*, *Then*, in the front of the text, carries us back to the consideration of the coherence.

The godly here, having this character given them,
B

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B

them, *They that feared the Lord*, were (as it seems) reserved to those last and looest times of the Jewish Church, after the return from *Babylon*; where the seventy years captivity had not much reformed or amended the major part of the Jews. Gods correcting hand had lain a long time sore heavie upon them; but God had not his end upon this untoward generation: these unsanctified persons grew worse and worse with afflictions; witness their blasphemous words before my text, where they stand flouting it out with the Lord of hosts, vers. 13. *Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord: yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?* They stick not to charge God with deep oscurancy and neglect of his best servants, (vers. 14.) as if they should reap no fruit from the service of God; as if all their labour were in vain: yea indeed, they tax God of flat iniquity, and most unequal administrations, vers. 15. *And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.* As if they had said, Surely there is no reward for the righteous, verily there is not a God that doth judge in the earth: the proud, who tempt God, and trample upon his people, they are not onely not punished, but even preferred and advanced for their labour: either things are not ordered by a divine providence, but left at random, let run at sixes and sevens; or else there is not an even or equal hand held over the sons of men, but partiality and unrighteousness found in God. Thus these miscreants in their madness set their mouths against heaven, and spared

pared not despitefully to spit their venom in the face of God himself. At the hearing of which horrid and abhorred blasphemies, the godly of these times are much affected; they met often about it, and not without a great deal of good conference: *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.* Then? when? Why whiles the wicked did blaspheme, and belch out their impieties against God; even at that instant and juncture of time, *they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.* Thus briefly of the Coherence.

The whole text may be divided into these two main or general branches:

1. A duty performed.
2. A mercy returned upon the performance of it.

The duty performed lies in the beginning of the text, even in these words: *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.* Which duty is illustrated or set forth two ways:

1. In the circumstances of it.
2. In the matter and substance of it.

In the circumstances; and they are two:

1. Of Time.
2. Of Persons.

Of time: *Then: Then they, &c.*

Of persons: They were such as feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name; as you see in the beginning and conclusion of vers. 16.

And then the duty is illustrated in the matter and substance of it; and that was frequent mutual conference; they spake often one to an-

other: *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.*

So much of the first general branch: the second is a mercy returned; and that is twofold:

First, Gods gracious acceptance;

1. In that for the present he regarded and respected what they did: *The Lord hearkened, and heard it.*
2. In that for the future he registred or recorded it: *And a book of remembrance was written before him.*

Secondly, His righteous remuneration or retribution,

1. Of mercy to his people: which reflects

1. Upon their persons.
2. Upon their performances.

Upon their persons, which he will

1. Own: *They shall be mine, saith the Lord.*
2. Honour: *In that day when I make up my jewels.*

Secondly, This mercy respects their performances, in passing by the weaknesses, defects, and failings of them: *I will spare them as a man, &c.*

And then lastly, you have Gods just and righteous retribution of judgement unto his enemies, vers. 18. *Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.*

And thus you have likewise briefly heard both the Division and Subdivision of the Text.

There is yet one thing more which I must wade thorow, before I proceed onto the Doctrine, and that is Explication.

Now

Now that I may make way unto the Doctrine the sooner, I shall open the 16 verse onely, and the two other verses when I come to the handling of them.

Well then, first of the 16 verse: *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkned and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name.*

In the Hebrew we read it thus: *Az niddbaru jirra Jehovah ish El raganaha: Then they fearing God, spake often man (or everyman) to his neighbour (or companion.)* For though the Hebrew word for *spake*, in the conjugation *Kal* nores a bare speaking; yet in the conjugation *Niphal*, *sermonis continuationem seu frequentationem significat*; it signifies the continuation or frequencie of their speaking one to another: they did not do it onely once or twice, but they did it often: *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.* Those few names that had not defiled their garments in so foul a season, but had kept themselves unspotted of the world, they *spake often*, &c.

Some render the text, *Tunc vastati sunt timentes Domini*, sc. *ab impiis & atheis impure eos invadentibus*: i. e. *Then were those that feared the Lord wasted and destroyed. viz. by those atheists, who fell from fierce words to bloody blows.* And the reason of this version or reading is, because the word *dibbi* in the text, in the conjugation *Pihel*, is rendered to *kill*, or to *destroy*. But I conceive that this is far fet, and nothing so agreeable unto the minde of the holy Ghost, as our Translation

is. For, 1. 'Tis not *dibberu* in *Pihel*, but *nidhberu* in *Niphal*. Besides, this reading is not so answerable to the following words.

I, but you will ask me, What did these men fearing the Lord speak, when they spake so often one to another?

Stock in his Exposition upon *Malachi*, and some others, think the words following to be theirs, and not God's words; who, they say, speaking not until the 17 verse, in comforting one another, they said, *The Lord hearkned and heard, &c.* But for my part, I rather incline to those who tell us, that the Prophet hath not in express words declared what these men fearing the Lord spake one to another; onely in telling us that they spake one to another, and by opposing them to the ungodly of that time, it must be supposed that they spake good and gracious things: they stood up to stickle for God, to stop the mouth of Blasphemy, and to establish one another in the perswasion of Gods holy Truth, and constant care of his own children. Those wicked ones did not speak so much against God, against his providence and government, as they did for God, in defence of his providence and government. And this they did for mutual strengthening and confirmation, that that which was haply halting might not be turned out of the way, but healed rather; that they might confirm each other against those great and grievous temptations which lay in their way.

It followeth: *And the Lord hearkned, and heard it.* Did they whisper so in one anothers ear, that no ear else heard them? No: *the Lord heark-*

hearkned, and heard it; the Lord listened, as it were, at the key-hole; he was under the window. The word *jachebil* in the Original, *he hearkned*, comes from a root which signifies to attend, and lift up the ear: *Gestus est diligenter auscultantis*; 'tis the gesture of one that hearkeneth diligently: and so the word is taken, *Isai.* 52.3. the later part of the verse: i. e. *They shall diligently hearken*. Nay, the word imports not onely attention of body, but attention of minde; as when a man listeneth as for life, and makes hard shift to hear all: thus *the Lord hearkned, and heard*; the Lord did diligently observe what they said, and what they did: nothing drops from them, but the Lord attentively regards it. *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkned and heard it.*

And a book of remembrance was written before him. In the Hebrew we read it thus: *And there was written a book of memory before his face.* We read in Scripture of a threefold book of God. The first is a book of his resolved Decree: of this we read, *Exod.* 32.32. Saith *Moses* there, *Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book, which thou hast written.* So *Psal.* 69. 28. So in many other texts, where by *book* we are to understand the book of Gods Decree, or Pre-ordination. Secondly, there is a book of Gods acted Providence: *Psal.* 139. 16. *Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, &c.* i. e. in thy book of providence. Now this later is but a transcript or copie of the former. Those huge original volumes

of love and blessings which he hath laid up in his heart for his own people; those also of wrath and judgment which he hath laid up there against his enemies from all eternity: those volumes (I say) of love or wrath are writing out every day, by the hand and pen of Providence. But then thirdly, there is a book of love, and of remembrance: *Psal. 56. 8. Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?* i. e. in thy book of remembrance. And this latter (Beloved) is the book spoken of here in my text. *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him:* *Liber monumenti*, A Book of Acts and Monuments; so some render it, in allusion unto the custom of Kings, *Esth. 2. 23.* latter part: *And it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.* *Tamerlain*, that warlike Scythian, of whom you read in the Turkish History, had always by him a catalogue of the names and good deserts of his servants, which he daily perused, and whom he duely rewarded; not needing by them, or by any others in their behalf, to be put in remembrance. Thus (Beloved) God (if I may so speak) files up the prayers of his servants, puts all their speeches as well as practices upon record, that he may make all honourable mention of them at the last day, in the General Assembly of heaven. *Liber Commentarii*, a book of Commentaries, so *Junius* renders it, where God doth as it were delcane and comment upon all the holy and gracious speeches and practices of his people. You must not understand it so, as

if God had any such Memorial-book, as if he stood in need of it, or were subject to forgetfulness; no, but 'tis spoken *αὐδὲ γαρ παραδώς*, after the manner of men, who have books to help their memories. God will no more forget the savoury religious discourses of his people, then a man doth that which he hath recorded in his book lying before him: *A book of remembrance was written before him; before his face.* If we speak but a word for God, we shall hear of it again: God takes it and pens it down: he sets it down presently; all was kept upon record. As when they who do not fear the Lord speak one to another, when wicked men plot against the righteous, or conspire against the holy ways of God, God hearkneth and heareth, and there is a book of remembrance kept of it; let them whisper as softly as they can, God can hear, and will record all their malicious speeches, all their evil devices and contrivements, whether against himself, or against his servants: so on the other side, when they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, in the justification of his ways, in the vindication of his providence, *the Lord hearkned and heard; and a book of remembrance was written before him.* Of the two, 'tis better exprest by a book, then by words: for that which is written, is more durable and permanent; whereas things spoken many times vanish, and are blown away in the air, and come to nothing.

Well then, in the last place, we will consider in whose behalf this book of remembrance was written: it was, you see, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name. For them that
feared

feared the Lord ; of that character of the godly spake something but even now : and that thought upon his Name ; a word or two only of this epithet or character. The word in the Original here used, is derived from a word which signifies not simply or barely to think , but to set the head and heart on work about that which we think upon. It carries the intention of the mind with it. *And that thought upon his Name* : i. e. that had God before their eyes, that minded his glory , that thought upon his Commandments to do them ; those are the persons for whom a book of remembrance was written before the Lord.

And thus have I at length finished the Coherence, the Division and Explication of the text. Before I proceed to open the subsequent verses, I shall enquire what Observations may be made upon , and Deductions gathered from this 16 verse which I have already opened.

And here first of all, I shall take into consideration the connexive or copulative particle *Then* in the beginning of the verse : *THEN they that feared the Lord*, &c. Then ? When ? Why in those looser and more degenerated times, when men were arrived to that height of impudency and profanels, as to say, it was to no purpose to serve God ; then when their black mouths were swollen big with their blasphemies ; *THEN they that feared the Lord spake often one to another* : they spake of God, and for God ; they then stood up in the vindication of his ways and administrations. So that (Beloved) from hence I shall note this Point ; namely,

That

That the servants of God must labour to shew themselves best in the worst times. When others were most against God, and contrary unto him, then must they be most stirring and active for God, most diligent and careful in his business. Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.

In the prosecution of which Point, I shall order my Method in this fashion.

1. I shall confirm the Point by precept.
2. Commend this duty, from the constant practice of the people of God in all Ages.
3. Clear it up, upon some grounds and rational considerations.

And then lastly, make some improvement of it unto our selves.

I shall proceed upon these several Heads, so far as the ordinary time will permit; beginning with those express precepts which are scattered up and down in the Scriptures to this very purpose. We will content our selves with three or four. The one is *Exod. 23. 2. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.* Some whereof are set down by way of negation, some by way of affirmation. The way to hell is broad, and much beaten. *Per viam publicam non ingredere*, was one of *Pythagoras* his precepts: Do not do as the most do, lest thou be undone for ever. *Argumentum turpissimum turba*, saith *Seneca*: An Argument from the multitude, is not argumentative. Nay, you see there is here in this text a special restraint put upon it: *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.* And the Reason is, because man is so apt to be led by many; the heart is

is ready to flatter it self into an opinion, that God will not be very angry when a practice is grown common: this is the course of the world, this is the way of most men; surely there is no great danger in it. Well now, saith God, *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.* A second text to this purpose, you have, *Prov. 1. 10, 11,* and following veries: *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not, &c. q.d.* Do not close in, or comply with them. And again, *Rom. 12. 2.* *Be not conformed to this world.* He doth not say, Live not in the world; we must live here, until God call us hence: neither doth he say, Use not the world; for 'tis impossible but that whiles we live here, we must use the world; though we are cautioned to *use the world as though we used it not*: but, *Be not conformed unto this world.* The word in the Greek is *συνμαρτυρεῖς*. *Accommodate not your selves to the world*: so Erasmus reads it. *Fashion not your selves to the world*: so Beza. But in ours, and some other Translations, *Conform not, &c.* As a Player is fashioned to the gesture and words, either of drunkenness or adultery, when he acteth them on the scaffold; that is the true notation of the word. *Be not conformed to this world*, i.e. Do not make the manners of the world the rule of your life: let not your corrupt mindes, which will carry you after a corrupt world, prevail with you. Now these are the precepts which are laid down by way of Negation. I shall give you two that are set down by way of Affirmation. *Acts 2. 43.* saith Peter there, *Save your selves from this untoward generation*; i. e. from the corrupt society of unbelie-

believers. And again, *2 Cor. 6. 17. Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord: q. d. Do not comply with the corruptions of the world; let all these go, whatever you lose or suffer for it. Thus much for the precepts.*

In the second place, I shall commend this duty unto you from the constant practice of the people of God, even in all ages. See an instance of it, 1. in *Noah*: when the whole earth was corrupt before God, he walked perfectly & uprightly with God in his generation, *Gen. 7. 1. Noah walked alone, in a way different from a world of wicked people; he was most sincere in the service of God, in the darkest midnight of damned impiety.* 2. *Abraham*, pull'd as a brand out of *Urr* of the *Caldees*, where-ever he came, he set up altars to God in the midst of Idolaters, and makes open profession of his worship before the people of the land, *Gen. 12. 6, 7, 8* So *Joshua* after him, *Josh. 24. 15. Do you what you will; though you do generally & universally serve other gods, I and my house will serve the Lord.* See this in *Elijah*, who was zealous for the Lord God of hosts, though alone and singular, *1 King. 19. 10.* I might tell you of *Obadiah*, who feared the Lord greatly, in a common defection, *1 King. 18.* But come we unto the New Testament, and let us see what practice of this duty we finde there. I shall begin with Christ, who is the original copie, an infallible unerring example: he was eaten up with the zeal of his Fathers house, when it was polluted and profaned by all sorts, *Joh. 2. 14, 15, 16, 17.* The Apostles after his departure resolved to obey God, notwithstanding the menaces of

of the Councel, *Acts* 4. 19, 20. Paul openly contesteth with the Gentiles at Athens about their senseless superstition, *Acts* 17. 22. Antipas held forth the Word of life even unto the death, where Satans throne was, *Rev.* 2. 13. Polycarp, that blessed Martyr of Jesus Christ, who being commanded by the Tyrant to do sacrifice to the Idol, returns this answer : *Eighty and odde years have I served my master Christ, and he never deceived me ; and shall I now desert him ? God forbid me any such wickedness. Octoginta sex annos illi servui, &c.* It were easie to come lower, and nearer our own times, and to produce a whole cloud of such who held forth the Word of life by a bold and wise profession in the darkness of Popery. But I will give you one onely instance more, and then conclude : it was *Athanasius*, that notable champion of Christ, who stood stoutly to the defence of the Truth, when all the Christian world beside was turned Arrian : *Ille vir totius orbis impetum sustinuit* : the whole world was set against *Athanasius*, and *Athanasius* against the whole world. And thus you have heard how the fore-mentioned duty hath been practised by the servants of God.

I come to the Grounds of the Point. If you look either upward or downward, either to God or men, you will finde Reason sufficient for the practice of this duty ; all which Reasons are grounded upon the text, and shall be thence gathered.

I shall begin with the first, The Reasons taken from God ; and they shall be these two.

1. God doth exactly observe, and graciously accept

accept of such his servants as continue constant with him in corrupt and depraved times, in a general defection or declension: when sin is grown usual, and almost epidemical, then to adhere to the Truths, Ways, and Ordinances of God, Oh how pleasing and acceptable is this unto God! *The Lord hearkned and heard*, (saith my Text) God was much taken and affected with those sweet conferences, those godly dialogues and discourses which dropt from the mouthes of the godly of those times: he *hearkned and heard*, it was melodious and delightful musick to his heavenly ears, and he doth as it were apply his ears close, he lays them near to their lips, as loth to lose any part of their holy language: *The Lord hearkned and heard.* 1 Pet. 3. 12, saith the Apostle there, *The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers*: or, as 'tis in the Original, *His ears are unto, or rather into their prayers: et innotant illis*. Now what the Apostle there speaks of that individual or particular duty of Prayer, is as true of their whole Christian practice: not a prayer which the godly put up, not a good work they do, not a good word which they utter, no not a good thought which they conceive, but the Lords eyes are upon it, and his ears open unto it; he sets it all down in his Register or Note-book: *A book of remembrance was written.*

But then, 2. As the Lord doth graciously accept of this practice, so will he plentifully reward it: this labour of faith and love shall never be forgotten; it shall not onely be entred or ingrossed in a book of remembrance, but *they shall*

they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts. 1. They shall be mine: i. e. I will not onely own them by a general right, as my creatures; but by a special, peculiar, and distinguishing title, as my children, my Saints and Servants, such as have made a covenant with me by sacrifice; I will be their God, and they shall be my people: I will look upon them as the top of my wealth, and my most esteemed treasure, as my Jewels, whom I will keep safe in the golden Cabinet of my special providence, and fatherly protection. But this is not all: I will spare them too, as a man spareth his onely son that serveth him: i. e. I will not cast them out, or reject them, for every small fault, for every flaw or defect in their services: I shall give them their allowance, pass by and over-look their weaknesses. How effectual (me thinks) might these Considerations be, to provoke us to a holy contention in godliness, when the times are never so bad and boisterous! Hereby we shall please God, hereby we shall procure good unto our selves. And thus in brief of the first sort of Reasons, taken from God.

The second sort respect Men: And that 1. Our selves: and then 2. Others. 1. Our selves. And this I shall branch forth into two particulars.

1. By cleaving or sticking close unto God in corrupt times, we shall approve our selves, 1. to be holy Christians: 2. to be zealous Christians. First, we shall make it appear that we are holy Christians, that we are men and women fearing God. *Jam. 1. 27.* saith the Apostle there, *Pure religion, and undefiled before God, and the Father, is this, — To keep himself unspotted from the world.*

world. When we keep our selves unspotted of the world, and escape untainted of it, 'tis an argument that our Religion is a pure Religion : a pure life, especially in impure times, argues a holy faith ; it signifieth, that *the mystery of faith is held in a pure conscience*. We never answer Religion better, then when we keep our way undefiled. 1 Cor. 11. 19. *There must (saith the Apostle) be errors also among you* : there must be errors in doctrine, and errors in practice ; corruption in judgement, and corruption in life : but why ? 'tis because *they which are approved may be made manifest* : ἵνα οἱ δοκιμασθῶσι γινώσκται ἐν ὑμῖν. The word δοκιμασθῶσι in the Greek is metaphorical, a Metaphor borrowed from allowance of Coyn : Silver which by the Goldsmiths trial is found good, is called δοκιμον, i.e. allowed, good and currant. Evil and corrupt times are discriminating and distinguishing times ; then men and women shew themselves what they are, whether counterfeit or currant professors : 'Tis then easie for men to judge of themselves, and for others to judge of them. Read Phil. 2. 15. *That ye may be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world*. There must be a perverse and graceless generation, a viperous brood, in the midst of whom Gods Saints must shine as lamps in the world, that so they may approve themselves blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, holding forth the Word of life, when 'tis most opposed and oppressed by the sons of Be-lial. This now, I say, is the property of a man

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that truly fears God ; he cannot blow hot and cold, as we use to say ; he dares not swear by God and *Malchom* ; he will not hide the Truth in indifferency : he knows that God must be worshipped truly, without halting ; and totally, without halving. That is the first thing.

But then, 2. As by cleaving unto God, his Truth and Service, in the worst times, we shall approve our selves to be holy Christians : so likewise shall we make it appear that we are zealous Christians, solicitously minding that high & holy Name of God, whereby we are called. Thus the holy Apostles standing before the Council, manifested themselves to be men enflamed with fervent zeal toward the honour of God, *Acts* 4. 20. & *ὁμολογούμενα ἡμεῖς μὴ λαλεῖν* . We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard ; we cannot do otherwise, we are necessitated unto it ; being like vessels, that when they are fill'd and stop't up, must either vent or break, without remedy. We may see this likewise in *Paul*, that precious man ; when once he became a chosen vessel to the Lord Christ, to bear his Name, never was he so mad before, in havocking those that called upon that Name in all places, as he was now fierce and fiery against all that did any thing contrary to the Name of Jesus. *Paul* declares himself to be a zealous Christian : and so shall we, if we hold fast and close to God, in loose and licentious times. Thus much likewise of the second sort of Reasons, taken from our selves.

The last sort of Reasons respect others ; and they shall be likewise two : the first concern the

the Godly ; the second, the Wicked.

1. Hereby good men shall be much confirmed and comforted, I mean, by our holding out in bad times : this is very effectual for the settling, strengthening, and establishing of the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, which it may be otherwise would warp, and turn out of the way. Whiles we cease not to speak (with these in my text) *often one to another, we build up one another in our most holy faith.* Phil. 1. 14. saith the Apostle there, *And many of the brethren in the Lord waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.* Pray mark it, *they waxed confident by my bonds.* By the Apostles constancie to, and perseverance in the Truth, in evil and persecuting times, the Gospel took deeper rooting and impression in the hearts of many of the Pastors of the Church : they were so far from being discouraged by the Apostles bonds, as that they grew bolder then they were before, and durst more freely to preach and to profess the Gospel. If you look into the *Acts and Monuments*, you shall finde what abundance of confirmation the godly of those times received, by their fellow-brethrens constancie in the Truth. Well might *Tertullian* say, *Constantia Martyrum irrigatur & augetur Ecclesia* : i. e. The Church was enlarged through the constancie of the Martyrs. Many instances of it might be given, were it necessary so to do.

But in the last place, *Gods servants must be best in worst times*, because hereby, as good men shall be confirmed, so wicked men shall be convinced, and even confounded ; & that not only in the last

great and general Judgement, but in this present world also. A full proof whereof you have in those two mighty, yet wicked Monarchs, in *Daniel*, *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Darius*. How was *Nebuchadnezzar* appaled, and even confounded, when he saw the high resolution and courage of those three Worthies, *Shadrach*, *Mes-hach* & *Abednego*, in changing the Kings word, and yielding their bodies to be burnt, rather then worship a strange god, *Dan.* 3. 28. there you may finde it. How was *Darius* amuzed and amazed, when *Daniel* by the strength of his faith had stoppt the mouthes of the lions, after he had stood it out stoutly to the face of his adversaries! How did the innocencie and piety of these godly men, triumph in the consciences of those two Tyrants, making them afraid, and compelling them to vote the same way that they had before persecuted, yea and to proclaim that God for the onely true God, whom yet they had no minde to set up for their own God. *Dan.* 3. 29. saith *Nebuchadnezzar* there, *I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill, because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort.* And *Dan.* 6. 25, 26. saith *Darius*, *I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom, men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.* 'Tis said of *Dioclesian*, that bloudy persecutor, *Imperium deposuit quodam mentis stupore*

pore & consternatione, postquam singularem Christianorum in morte constantiam perspexisset: i. e. That he laid down his Empire with terroure and consternation of minde, after he had observed that height of spirite, resolution and constancie which was in the Christians. How did Steven, being full of faith and courage, astonish his adversaries! The text saith, Acts 6. 15. All that sate in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel. So true is that of Solomon, Prov. 28. 4. They that forsake the law, praise the wicked: but such as keep the law, contend with them. A godly man, I say, that is unmoveable, not like a troubled fountain, or a corrupt spring, though he may for a time receive evil words from the wicked, yet their hearts are afraid of him, and their consciences do admire him.

And thus (Beloved) you have heard the several Grounds and Reasons of the Point, as far forth as time will permit. I shall make some Improvement of it unto our selves.

This Point I shall apply two ways: 1. for Increparation; and then 2. for Exhortation.

1. For Increparation, or Reproof. This Doctrine casts a severe aspect upon two sorts:

1. Upon all formal and luke-warm *Lao-diceans*, upon all temporizing and corrupt time-serving Gospellers.
2. Upon all timorous, fearful, and faint-hearted Christians.

For the first of these: Is it so, That the servants of God must labour to shew themselves best in the worst times, that they should shine most in

the greatest darkness, and then with those fearers of God here in my text, shew themselves most zealous for the Lord, when others are most audacious in sinning against the Lord? This then doth most sharply reprehend all formal and temporizing professors, who, contrary to the rules of Gods most holy Word, contrary to the practice of so many of his renowned servants in former ages, and contrary to the irrefragable truth of the point in hand, hold it best and safest to swim with the common current, to keep themselves on the warm side of the hedge, as we use to say; to do as the most do, though in and by so doing, they be utterly undone for ever: nay, and that they may not seem *sine ratione insanire*, to be mad without reason, they plead Scripture, or rather wrest and pervert Scripture, for the defence of their wicked purpose; as, that of the Preacher, *Eccles. 4. 10. Wo to him that is alone when he falleth: for he hath not another to help him up.* That, *Eccles. 7. 16. Be not righteous over-much, neither make thy self over-wise: why shouldst thou destroy thy self?* I, and that of the Apostle Paul too, *1 Cor. 9. 22. where he saith, To the weak I became as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* Hence it is, that they think themselves secured and shrowded from the dint of any such reproof as this is; pleasing themselves in a cold and careless mediocrity in spiritual matters. How many have taken up that cursed Maxime, which was all the Latine that *Lewis 11. King of France* would have his son to learn, *Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit vivere*; he that cannot

not sycophantize and dissemble, is not in case to live in a Commonwealth ! They can, Cameleon-like, turn themselves into any colour, accommodate themselves to any mans humour : they can, as the Planet *Mercury*, be good, when in conjunction with good ; and bad, when in the company of bad : Weathercock like, comply with the times, let them be what they will ; and shift sail to the setting of every winde : like the *Ebionites*, of whom *Eusebius* tells us, that they would keep the Sabbath with the Jews, and the Lords day with the Christians : like men that would seem to be of all Religions, when in truth they were of none : like those Israelites, *Neh. 13.* that spake both *Hebrew* and *Ashdod* ; or to *Balam* ; that could both bless and curse : those double-minded men, of whom the Apostle *James* speaks, who are *instable in all their ways* ; imprisoning the truth in unrighteousness. These are the men who come under this first Reprehension.

Beloved, all that I shall say concerning these profligate professors, that can tune their Fiddles to the Base of the times, resolving to play nothing but what the company calls for : The Lord will spue such Parasites out of his mouth, as too loathsome a morsel for his stomach to brook or bear. *Rev. 3. 16* saith Jesus Christ there, called the *Amen*, the faithful and true Witnes, the beginning of the creation of God : Because thou art luke-warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. When a man rids his stomach, he gets him into a corner : so will Almighty God rid his stomach of such, in the dark corner

of hell. To the same purpose I may apply that, *Isai 1.24. Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies : q.d. I will cast up this loathsome stuff, that lies so hard upon, and is so offensive to my stomach. Which done, the devil, as a dog, stands ready waiting, to lick up Gods vomit. Everlasting wo will be the portion of all those who are neither hot nor cold ; in nothing so constant, as in their Unconstancie.*

And thus briefly of the first sort, that come under the lash of this Reproof.

The second sort to be here reprov'd, are timorous and faint-hearted Christians, who, with the Snail, pull in their horns for every pile of grass; who are ashamed of Jesus Christ their Masters Cognizance, for every light counterblast, either of disgrace, or danger. I am to tell you, that the Lord holds all such white-liver'd souldiers in such special detestation, that he will not employ them so far as to break a pitcher or to bear a torch in his service, *Judg.7.3.* There are three texts, amongst others, which I thought good to commend unto the consideration of such. The one is *Mark 8.38* *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.* Christ our Lord foresaw, that, as many would take up the profession of the Gospel for their credit, advantage, and other sinister and collateral respects; so many would withdraw from it, for fear of shame. I, but saith he, Those who are now so shie of me, so shie to own me, my Truths, my

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Service, before men, I will one day be every whit as shie of them, and ashamed to own or acknowledge them before my Father and the blessed angels; at that day, when I shall make most ample relation, before God, angels and men, yea, all honourable mention of such as were not ashamed of me in this world; then will I be ashamed of them, who are loth to be seen forward in my service. The second text that I shall press upon such as these, is that of the Apostle *Peter*, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21. *For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the later end is worse with them then the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, then after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.* 'Tis better that a man never put his hand to the Plough, then after he hath done it, with *Lor's* wife, to look back, through fear and dastardliness. It were more safe, yea more tolerable and excusable, and that not upon a few Considerations. But I shall stand no longer upon this first Use; onely give you the third text, and so proceed unto a second Use of the Point. *Rev. 21. 8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, add whoremongers, and forcerers, and idolaters, and all lyers, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.* Why are the fearful first named, before unbelievers, murderers, whoremongers? The reason is, because the Spirit of God held them worthy to be set in the front,

front, and to lead the Ring-dance, as it were, of such wicked ones as should be hurried into hell. By *fearful*, saith Mr. *Diodate* in his Annotations, he intends such as through carnal and base fear dare not to own, or at least to profess the Truth of God, in corrupt and loose times.

And thus far of the first Corollary or Deduction from this Point. I come now to the second.

2. Is it so, *That the servants of God must labour to shew themselves best in worst times?* Be we then all provoked to set upon the practice of this most necessary, and yet much-neglected duty, labouring to shine forth in evil times, like that lamp, *Gen. 15. 17.* that shined out in the smoakie furnace; or like that bright star, that shewed it self in the midst of darkness, *Matth. 2.* Oh let our piety & patience appear then most, when impiety and violence do most prevail. As the colder the air, and the harder the weather, the more the fire scorseth: so let our zeal, by an holy *Antiperistasis*, then flame out, and break thorow all impediments, when most oppugned and opposed. Beloved, what though we should finde few or none that will set in, or side with us in this important work, in this *One thing necessary*? yea, what though all men should forsake us? yet the Lord will stand by us, and strengthen us, as he did those sweet souls here in my text, who *feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name.* Lift up therefore the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees: let us even in the loosest and profanest times, advance with a holy undauntedness of spirit toward that incorruptible and never-fading

fading crown that is reserved for us in heaven ; like fishes retaining their natural sweetness in the salt sea ; like Salamanders, which live unscorcht in the fire ; like Oyl, that will over-top all other liquors, but not commingle with them. If we profess our selves to be such as fear the Lord, let us ever hold a constant counter-motion to the course of the world, and the corruptions of the times : let us keep our consciences good and unspotted, as our best and chiefest treasure.

Now because this is a duty of great difficulty, and very uncouth to flesh and bloud, take along with you these following Rules or Directions, for your assistance. I shall run them over briefly, and so conclude.

First: Re-inforce upon your Consciences those precepts which were recited in the confirmation of this Point ; and withal, consider the equity and reasonableness of those commands. Know, that there is not any one command of God, but is *holy, just, and good* ; had we but eyes to see it, and to take notice of it. *Rom. 7. 12.* saith the Apostle in that place, *The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good.* Whatsoever contrariety or antipathy there is between the commands of God and the hearts of men and women, it proceeds not from any injustice or unreasonableness in the commands, but from the corruption and depraved disposition of men and womens own hearts. Who will not say and acknowledge, that the most are ever the worst ? why then should we go against common sense, and universal experience ? nay, the Scripture, which is the Word of truth and verity, tells

tells us plainly, that the way to hell is broad, and most beaten: *the gate that leadeth to destruction is wide, and many enter in at it: but the way that leadeth unto life is straight and narrow, and few finde it.* Now who doth not judge it better, with a few, to go to heaven, then with a multitude to pass down to hell? Christs flock hath been ever found to be a little flock, *Luke 12.32.* when the wicked on the other side fill the country. This the purblind Philosophers saw; and therefore they say, *Sapiendum cum paucis*; we should be wise, though with a few. *Diogenes* thought he should do best, when he did least what the most did. *Vive ut pauci*, saith another; Live as the fewest live. It was a brave answer of *Liberius* in the Primitive times, who, when he was urged by *Constantius* to forsake the Truth of God, and to vote for *Arrianism*, by this Argument, *Art thou wiser then all the world?* he very honestly and discreetly replied, *The Truth is no whit prejudiced by my singularity and aloneness in standing out.* In a word, it matters not how small the number be, if godly; nor how great, if ungodly. Multitude is not much to be stood upon. So then, this is the first Direction, Lay to heart the commands of God, and the holiness and reasonableness of the commands; and hereby, through mercy, you may in the first place be assisted in the performance of this great incumbent duty. I come to a second.

Secondarily: If you would stand up for God and his Truth, in evil, corrupt, and degenerating times; then study the great Art or Lesson of Self-denial; learn to say *Nay* to all those persons

or things (though never so dear or delightful)
 that would cool thy courage for Christ, or take
 thee off from this godly practice. *Mark 8.*
34. saith our Saviour there, Whosoever will come
after me, let him deny himself. Now there are
 three or four particulars which we ought to de-
 ny our selves in, in this case. The first, is carnal
 and fleshly Reason; if that should perswade us
 (as 'tis apt to do) to a forbearance of our holy
 resolution, by the fear of what may follow: if
 that should dictate or suggest unto us, as 'tis *Ec-*
cles. 7. 16. the place before mentioned; *Be not*
righteous over-much, neither make thy self over-
wise: why shouldst thou destroy thy self? i.e. Be
 discreet and wary, and stand not so strictly upon
 terms of Conscience: why shouldst thou incur
 needless danger? Stop thine ears unto this
 subtil Enchantress, and rather hearken to the
 voice of Gods Spirit in the verse immediately
 following, *vers. 17. Be not over much wicked,*
neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before
thy time? Pray observe the Antithesis or oppo-
 sition: *Be not wicked over-much,* saith he, in op-
 position to the former, *Be not righteous over-much;*
neither be foolish, in opposition to *neither make thy*
self over-wise: for *why shouldst thou die before thy*
time? in opposition to *why shouldst thou destroy thy*
self? This is the voice of heaven, wherewith
 we are to stop the mouth of that wisdom which
 descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual,
 devilish. 2. If you intend to keep in with
 Christ, then deny your selves in your carnal
 friends and relations, who will be ready enough
 to prompt you, as Peter did once Christ, *Matth.*

16.22. they will be ready to bid you to be *good to your selves*, and not to run the hazard of disgrace or disadvantage. Now for a counter-poyson, let us consider, that there is no friend like God, and there is no foe like unto him. *Eli*, you know, paid dear for displeasing the Lord, to please his children, 1 *Sam.* 2. 29, 30, and following verses. And it was like to have cost *Moses* his life, for forbearing to circumcise his child, lest he should anger his wife, *Exod.* 4. 24.

Thirdly, Deny your selves in your Liberties. *Micaiah* though he were sure to kiss the Stocks, and there to be fed with the bread and water of affliction, until *Ahab* returned in peace, yet would he not be byassed for any mans pleasure, nor vote with the rest of *Ahab's* Parasitical Prophets, 1 *King.* 22. 26, 27, 28. And

Then last of all, deny your selves in your lives, (if called unto it.) What cared the three children for *Nebuchadnezzar's* wrath, though it burned seven times hotter then his furnace? Kill them he might possibly, but hurt them he could not. He that truly fears God, and thinks upon his Name, dreads no danger, fears no colours: he will take Christ's cross upon his shoulders, a sagger in his arms, and his life in his hand, and so follow Christ thorow thick and thin, thorow fire and water, or any thing else that stands in his way. And this is the second assistant Direction.

The third and last is this: Let us think sadly and seriously upon our high and heavenly calling, and labour to walk worthy of it, as the Apostle often exhorts us to do. Every calling hath a de-

corum, a seemliness or comeliness appertaining unto it. A Gentleman hath another manner of behaviour then a Scullion; a Prince, then a Peasant: so should a Christian too: a man that fears God, should not behave himself like other men; he should demean himself nobly, bravely, gallantly, worthy of God, and as becometh a Saint, a Citizen of heaven, and a Burgess of the new Jerusalem; not clownishly, basely, or cowardly. 'Tis some singular thing that God looks for from his people, and that which is above vulgar and common achievement. And therefore, to winde up all in a word, you that *fear God, and think upon his Name*, look to your selves, that you lose not those things which you have wrought, but that you receive a full reward. *The ends of the world (you see) are come upon us*; we are cast upon the last and worst times of all, even those *perilous times*, which the Apostle long since prophesied of; wherein *iniquity aboundeth, and the love of many is waxen cold*. How many amongst us are fallen from the love of the Gospel? How is Religion turned with many into meer formality, and matter of discourse; our ancient heat and forwardness, to a general coldness in profession, lukewarmness in Religion, denying the power of it in our lives and conversations!

Well, I shall say but little more unto you then this: That which you have already, *hold fast until Christ comes*; and seeing you know these things beforehand, *take heed lest you also be pluckt away with the error of the wicked, and fall from your own steadfastness*. Beware of turbulencie of spirit, of despising dignities and dominion; of resisting

giving lawful Authority : live peaceably in the State, and in your several places : but take heed that you prove not men and women of polluted lips, by living among a people of polluted lips : learn not to swear, with *Joseph*, by conversing with Swearers ; or to curse, with *Peter*, by being a while among the ruffianly companions. The worse, the more corrupt or erroneous, yea, the less comfortable than any times are, the better should we be, and the oftener in Gods presence ; the more religiously should we contend for that faith which was once delivered unto the Saints ; even then, with those fearers of God here in my Text, should we speak often one to another. And thus much of this Point, taken from the copulative or connexive particle, *Then*, in the front of the Text. *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, &c.*

And thus far of the duty here performed, in reference to the first circumstance of it, the circumstance of Time, included in the connexive particle *Then*.

I shall now handle it in relation to its second circumstance, the circumstance of Persons, who they were, or what they were, that spake thus often one to another in those corrupted and depraved times : and they are described by a double property, or periphrasis :

1. They were such as feared the Lord.
2. They were such as thought upon his Name.

This day I shall speak onely of the first of them, the fearers of the Lord : *Then they that feared the Lord, &c.* The fearers of the Lord, or, which

which is all one, *Then they that feared the Lord, spake, &c.*

Now whereas the Spirit of God by our Prophet makes this the mark, note, or distinguishing character *between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not*; I observe this Doctrine for our instruction, namely,

That every true and faithful servant of God is a fearer of God. Every such a one hath his heart seasoned and possessed with the fear of God.

And here I shall

1. Open the Point.
2. Confirm it. And
- Last of all, apply it.

For the better understanding of the Doctrine, I must distinguish of *fear*. There is a threefold fear spoken of in Scripture:

1. Natural.
2. Carnal.
3. Holy and spiritual.

I shall shew you the nature of each of these, and then tell you which of them is to be understood in the Doctrine.

Natural fear is caused by the apprehension of some evil imminent or at hand: 'tis such an affection as whereby men are stricken, by reason of some dangerous and hurtful evil, either real, or onely imagined: that is the definition of natural fear. In it self it is neither good nor evil; it was in the man Christ, *Heb. 5. 7.* Christ's fear was onely a natural passion, which he assumed and took upon him, when he took upon him our nature.

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nature.

nature. Now there are four special effects which this fear worketh upon the body.

The first, is the quaking of the members of the body.

The second, is the shaking of the bones.

The third, is the standing up of the hair.

The fourth, is the paleness or wanness of the countenance.

The three first of these appeared upon *Eli-phaz*, at the appearance of his vision, *Job* 4. 14, 15. He trembled, his bones shook, and the hair of his flesh stood up. This natural fear we cannot justly blame, because every thing by the instinct of Nature endeavours the preservation of it self, and fears the contrary: provided it do not degenerate into the second, which is carnal fear.

Carnal fear now is that which is carried after the creature more then after the Creator. We read of it, *Isai.* 51. 12, 13. Or else 'tis the dread of the Creator as a Judge, the apprehension of his severe wrath and punishment; and not from a true hatred of sin: and this we may call, *A servile or slavish fear*. Thus *Felix* feared, *Acts* 24. 25. he feared that judgment to come, which *Paul* reasoned of. This fear ariseth partly from a defect of faith in the power and providence of God; and partly, from want of holy and spiritual fear, which I am to speak of in the third place.

Spiritual fear is a holy affliction, awing the whole man to obey the whole will of God: it makes us loth to displease God by sin, by reason of his great goodness and mercy, and for the great love which

which we bear unto righteousness. Of this we read, *Psal. 130. 4.* where 'tis said, *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* And again, *Hos. 3. 5.*—*and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the later days.* This holy and filial fear is called *spiritual*, in three respects, amongst other.

1. In regard of its object, which is God, who is a spirit, and the Father of spirits. And hence 'tis that God is sometimes expressly called *fear*, *Gen. 31. 53.* later part of the verse: *And Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac:* i. e. by that God whom his father Isaac feared: And *Psal. 76. 11.* *Vow and pay unto the Lord your God; let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.* In the Original, it runs thus: *Bring presents unto fear.*

Then 2. This holy fear is called *spiritual*, from the principal efficient author of it, which is the holy Spirit of God, who is sometimes called a spirit of fear, *Isa. 11. 2.*

And then 3. *Spiritual*, in respect of those spiritual effects which it produceth or worketh in the heart of man. I shall name three of them very briefly.

First of all, it doth spiritually enlarge the heart towards God. Fear, under a natural consideration, shuts and straitens the heart, and makes a man less then he was in all his abilities; but spiritual fear, or fear spiritualized, makes a man more then he was, and better then he was; it doth exceedingly enlarge the heart toward God: and therefore you shall finde *fear* and *enlargement* put together, *Isa. 60. 5.* where the

Prophet speaking of the holy fear which should follow the glory of the Church, in the abundant access of the Gentiles to the Gospel, he saith, *Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.*

Secondly, this spiritual fear is a bridle to restrain us from sin. An example of it you have in *Joseph*, Gen. 39.9.

And then thirdly, as 'tis a bridle to restrain us from sin; so 'tis a bond to hold us to duty: it will constrain us unto well-doing: *Jer.* 32.40. *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me:* q. d. The more you fear me, the closer will you keep to me. None live so near God, none obey God so much, as they who fear him in this manner.

And thus have I given you the sorts and kinds of fear. Now the question will be, Which of these three fears we are to understand in the Doctrine: when we say, *That every true and faithful servant of God is a fearer of God*; why (Beloved) we are to understand, the later hath his heart seasoned and possessed with the holy, spiritual, filial and reverential fear of God.

And thus much for the Explication of the Point. I come in the next place to the Confirmation of it.

This Point shall be made good unto you three ways.

1. In that the Scripture doth decipher or characterize the true servants of God under the notion of the fearers of God; and that not onely
here

here in my text , (*Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, &c.*) but elsewhere. Take two or three texts more. *Prov. 4. 2. He that walketh in his uprightness, feareth the Lord : but he that is perverse in his ways, despiseth him : i.e.* He that is sincere and upright in the service of God, he that serves him truly, and with a perfect heart, is such a one as feareth the Lord ; the fear of the Lord is upon him , nay, he is in the fear of the Lord all the day long. So again, *Mal. 4. 2. But unto you that fear my Name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings ; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. You that fear my Name.* is opposed to the proud and wicked in the first verse of the chapter: *For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. Unto you, i.e.* who are my servants. And, *Acts 13. 16. Then Paul stood up, and beckening with his hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.* Many other Scriptures might be alleadged unto the same purpose , where to fear God, is set down as a circumlocution or periphrasis of them that truly serve God. When the holy Ghost would express a true servant of God, he expresseth him in this variation ; *He is one that feareth God.*

But then secondly , *That every true and faithful servant of God, is a fearer of God,* may be proved thus ; in that the service of God, and the fear of God, are in Scripture conjoynd , as two inseparable or individual companions : the

Spirit of God doth often make them go hand in hand together. *Josh. 24. 14.* Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity, and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt: serve ye the Lord. Mark it well: fear the Lord, and serve him: intimating, that where there is not the fear of God, there is, there can be, no true service performed unto God. Reade *Psal. 2. 11.* Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoyce with trembling. Fear and service are here coupled together. A fearless heart, is always a graceless heart. Fear is that affection with which we must worship and serve God: *Heb. 12. 28* Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. Fear, you must know, is a comprehensive word; it is more then a particular grace; it contains Faith and Love too: though perfect love casteth out tormenting fear, *1 Joh. 4. 18.* yet perfect love casts in obeying fear. When Abraham had offered up his son Isaac, that was a work of mighty faith: but yet when God commends him for it, he doth not say, *Now I know thou hast a great faith*; but, *Now I know thou fearest God*, *Gen. 22. 12.* Fear is all duty; 'tis every grace: it carries every particular duty and grace in the womb of it. *Eccles. 12. 13.* Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man; or, as 'tis in the Hebrew, *This is the whole man*: this is that which maketh a perfect and a compleat Christian, a Christian indeed.

But then thirdly and lastly, as the true fear and service of God are in Scripture sometime
con-

conjyned, so are they likewise confounded, and taken promiscuously, the one for the other, as reciprocal and convertible terms; fearing of God, is worshipping or serving of God. You may see this clearly by two texts of Scripture, conferred or compared together. *Matth. 4. 10.* saith Christ there to the devil, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him onely shalt thou serve.* Compare this now with *Deut. 6. 13.* and there you shall have it thus exprest: *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his Name.* That which in the one place is *worship*, in the other is *fear*. So again, *Matth. 15. 9.* saith Christ there, *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men.* Now the Prophet *Isaiah*, from whence that Scripture is taken, expresth it thus, *Isa. 29. 13.* *lar. part: Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men. They worship me according to the precepts of men,* saith Christ; *Their fear is taught by the precepts of men,* saith the Prophet. So that *fear* and *worship*, or *fear* and *service*, are identical, one and the same thing. And thus have you here the Point confirmed by Scripture, *That every true and faithful servant of God, is a searer of God.* I shall now answer an Objection, and so proceed unto Application.

The Objection is this, briefly:

How do you say, *That the true and faithful servants of God, are searers of God*; or that the *service of God* and the *fear of God* are coupled together; yea, that they are one and the same thing? whenas in Scripture we are required to *serve God without fear*, as namely, *Luke 1. 74.* by

this text it appears, that the *service of God* and the *fear of God* do not commingle, much less are one and the same thing. If our service must be done without fear, how then do fear and service go together? This is the Objection.

Beloved, by way of answer, we must learn to distinguish of Fear: *Qui bene distinguit*, we say, *bene docet*: he that distinguisheth well, teacheth well. There is a hellish fear, and there is a holy fear; a slavish fear, and a son-like fear. The hellish or slavish fear, is such as slaves have of those, or towards those to whom they are in bondage: 'tis a respect they carry to those in whose power, and under whose command they are: they do indeed that which is enjoined them; but they neither love their commanders, nor take any complacencie or delight in that which is commanded them: what they do, they do by coercion and enforcement, and in fear of the whip. Such is the fear of God in reprobates and in wicked men: they are stricken with a kinde of awe of Gods great and terrible majestie; they do even tremble at his judgements: they do, it may be, what is required, but their obedience proceedeth not out of any love to God, or out of any true affection to the service. Thus *Cain*, *Esau*, *Pharaoh*, *Ahab*, *Judas*, and others, feared: they had some apprehensions of the terrour of the Lord, and that wrung something from them, in which otherwise of themselves they took no manner of delight: *Cain* cast down his countenance, *Esau* wept, *Pharaoh* let the children of *Israel* go, *Ahab* humbled himself, *Judas* repented, as I could shew you from several Scriptures.

But

But then secondly, there is a holy, filial, and childlike fear ; and 'tis a fear to offend, arising out of the sense and feeling of the love of God; as, when the experience I have had in mine own soul, of Gods merciful and gracious dealing with me, makes me to entertain a fear lest I should abuse his love, and turn his grace into wantonness, and do ought that might displease his Majesty ; as I shewed you before, in the opening of the Doctrine. And this kinde of fear may be, where is the greatest and firmest, yea, the most respective love ; as betwixt the father and the son, the husband and the wife.

This distinction of Fear being thus premised, it will be easie to untie the knot, or to solve the Querie. When we are required to serve God without fear, we are to understand the foresaid hellish, servile, or slavish fear. When *Zacharies* meaning, in that *Luk. 1.* is this : whereas the face of God is naturally a terrour to us, even as the face of a Judge is to a malefactor; and whereas our services are so full of defects and blemishes, as that we can have no courage to present them unto God, nor hope that he will accept them. This is the end of our Redemption, that being certainly perswaded of the favour of God in Christ, and of remission of sins by him, this servile and slavish fear must be laid aside, and we may come boldly unto the throne of grace, and comfortably assure our selves that God for Christs sake will accept even our imperfect and scant measure of obedience. This servile fear now, and the true service of God, cannot stand together ; yea, they are opposite and contrary one

to another. But now when I say in the Doctrine, *That the true and faithful servants of God are fearers of God*; and that the fear and service of God are joyned together: I intend, as I told you before, a holy, filial, child-like, and reverential fear; and with such a fear every true servant of God fears God. The fear and the service of God are put together, and must ever go together; nay, without it we can never serve God truly, and as we ought to do.

And thus having answered the Objection, I should in the next place proceed unto Application.

The Uses of the Point shall be three.

1. For Information.
2. Of Examination.
3. Of Exhortation.

But the ordinary time being spent, I shall adjourn the prosecution of them unto the after-noon. Let this suffice for the present.

The first Use shall be for Information.

Is it so, *That the true and faithful servants of God are fearers of God*? Why then it will in the first place follow, by way of Consecratory, That all such as are void of the holy, spiritual, and reverential fear of God, are no better then graceless and irreligious persons. And hence 'tis, that in Scripture you finde this often made the Note or Character of a childe of Belial, *That there is no fear of God before his eyes*. Abraham looks upon Gerar, as a place or people that was destitute of all goodness, as a place wherein he could

could not be safe, upon this account, because the fear of God was not amongst them, *Gen. 20. 11.* where he saith, *Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place : and they will slay me for my wifes sake.* Thus David describes the whole man, *Psal. 36. 1.* *There is no fear of God before his eyes.* They have no impediment in the way of their lust, who have once cast off the fear of God. As they are unready to do or say any thing that is good ; so are they ready to do or say any thing that is evil. As they can easily restrain themselves from duty, so have they no restraint upon them from iniquity. This *Abraham* knew, and so he could not think himself secure there. The profession (I confess) of some wicked men, may say that they fear God : but their transgressions, or trade of sin, saith that there is no such matter. We may interpret this text of the wicked mans saying thus, three ways. Some say it with their mouthes, and are not ashamed to utter their defiance against the fear of God. 2. All wicked men, yea, the most modest of them, say it in their hearts ; they are inwardly enemies to the fear of God. And very many (in the third place) say it in their lives. Now all these, saith *David*, are wicked men : if once the fear of God be cast off, all wickedness is let in : at the same door at which the fear of the Lord goes out, any sin or abomination may enter. Nay, you shall finde yet further, that after a large enumeration of other abominations found in mens hearts and lives, the Spirit of God names the want of this holy fear of God, as the mother and cursed root of them all. You may see this in *Mal. 3. 5.*

What

What are not men, yea what wo'nt they be, when once they are destitute of the fear of God? Sorcerers, Adulterers, Swearers, Oppressors, and what not? The judge spoken of, *Luke 18. 2.* is therefore termed *unjust*, because he feared not God: *There was in a city a judge, which feared not God:* Wanting the fear of God, what should keep him from injustice? So again, *Rom. 3. 11, 12, 13,* and the following verses: *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God: they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit, &c.* Now mark the conclusion in the 18 verse: *There is no fear of God before their eyes.* This brings up the reere, as it were; as to entertain the fear of God, is the beginning of wisdom, *Prov. 1. 7.* The word here used for *beginning*, signifieth not onely the beginning, but the top, the chief, the head and highest perfection of a thing: now as the fear of God is both first and last, the beginning and end of holiness; so to cast off the fear of God, is the beginning and ending of all wickedness, the upshot of all wickedness: a man that hath cast off the fear of God, is desperately wicked.

But you will say, Are there any people so barbarous, is there any person so brutish, that feareth not God?

Beloved, I confess there is nothing more natural, then to stand in awe of a Deity. Hence it is, that *Θείος, God*, in the Greek tongue, hath his name from *Αἶδος, fear*, as some derive it: and sometime the Scripture useth the word *fear*, of

terroure, for God, as you heard in the morning : and the reason is, because of the fear that is confessedly due unto him. But that all fear not the true God, or that they do not fear him with a holy, spiritual, and filial fear, and so consequently are none of his, is more then evident. I shall clear these things unto you distinctly.

1. All men fear not the true God, but something else, which they substitute and set up in the room, place, and stead of God. Some fear idols, and devils, *1 Cor. 10. 20.* some, the Queen of heaven, *Jer. 44. 17.* Some fear disgrace ; so *Saul*, *1 Sam. 15. 30.* some, danger, and displeasure of great ones ; as *Pilate*, who feared, if he released Christ according to his conscience, *Cesar* would pull his Purple over the ears, and kick him off the bench. Some fear the loss of goods ; as the rich young man, who went away sorrowful, when he was required to sell all that he had. Some fear the loss of their liberty ; as those who forsook *Paul* the prisoner, and were ashamed of his chain, *2 Tim. 4. 16.* where *Paul* saith, *At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.* And then, some again fear the loss of life, shrinking in the shoulder when call'd to bear the cross of Christ. Thus, I say, men fear any thing besides what they should fear, I mean God, the proper object of this, and of our other affections. Well then, 'tis clear, you see, that all men fear not the true God, that God who is alone to be feared.

And the second is as evident. Those that profess to fear the true God, how few of them are there to be found, who fear him in truth,
who

who fear him with this noly, filial, and spiritual fear, which is the fear I now speak of? If so, *what means the bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the oxen which we hear?* what mean the Oaths, Drunkenness, the Sabbath-breaking, the Uncleanness, the Pride, that we see and hear to be amongst us? Beloved, if the true fear of God were amongst us all, do you think that these vices could rule and reign amongst us as they do? Doubtless they could not: these sins are inconsistent and incompatible with a true and holy fear. Alas, how little of this reverential fear of God is there in the hearts of most men? The Psalmist, in the fore-mentioned 36 Psalm, in the beginning of it, makes this good, both in respect of evil to be avoided, and of good to be performed: My minde gives me, saith he, and I am verily perswaded, having taken some observation of the wicked mans way, that there is no fear of God in his heart: *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.* But what is the ground of this perswasion? may it not be a rash and uncharitable censure that *David* passeth upon him? No, saith he, I will prove what I say, both from his thoughts, words and actions.

1. From his Thoughts. He makes no scruple or conscience at all of evil thoughts: he thinks that thoughts are free, and therefore suffers them to rove and wander any way: *He deviseth mischief upon his bed*: he formeth, frameth, and contriveth it inwardly in his heart.

2. I prove it from his words: saith *David*, *They are stout against God*, as the words of those wicked

wicked ones before my text were : *Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord.*

And then 3. From his deeds, in the later part of the fourth verse : *He setteth himself in a way that is not good : he abhorreth not evil.* Leave some sin perhaps he may , out of some politick ends and respects : but loath and abhor it , that he doth not.

This now is the disposition of all wicked men in reference to that which is evil : their very thoughts, words and actions are grossly and abominably wicked ; and this sufficiently sheweth that they have no fear of God before their eyes. And as this is true in reference to Evil , so likewise in respect of that which is Good. I shall shew you this in a word , and so conclude this first Use.

A wicked person, saith the Prophet, hath no fear of God before his eyes , because *he hath left off to do good*, vers. 3. later part of it. With these miscreants before my text, he accounts it a course of no benefit or profit, to be religious : he sees it not needful to seek to the Lord : he *restraineth prayer*, saith *Eliphaz*, Job 15. 4. What *Eliphaz* here speaks , is true of a wicked man in *thefi*, a wicked man restrains or lessens prayer ; but not true in *hypothesi*, as referr'd to *Job* : this was true in the Doctrine , but not in the Application. Now, Beloved , to cast off Prayer, is to cast off God : he that lives without prayer in the world, lives without the fear of God in the world : and hence you finde *the heathen that know not God*, and *the families that call not upon his Name*, joyned together, or indeed rather the same, *Jer.*

10.25. Much more might be said in this particular : but what is already spoken, is enough to make this manifest, namely, That all men do not fear God in a holy and spiritual manner ; and so by direct consequence, are no true servants of God, but graceless and irreligious persons.

And this shall serve for the first Use, the Use of Information. I now proceed unto the second.

And that shall be an Use of Examination.

Is it so, as you have heard in the Doctrine, *That every true and faithful servant of God, is a fearer of God?* Let us then call our selves to an account, and so learn to settle the soundness of our gracious estate, by securing this unto our own souls, That we are men and women truly fearing God. Without this, we can never ascertain our own hearts that we are the true and faithful servants of God: unless we be fearers of God, we cannot say that we are the servants of God.

But then you will say, How may I come to know whether or no, with those sweet and gracious souls in the text, I am a man or a woman truly fearing God?

Now to the end that I may give you satisfaction in this Querie, I shall lay down some Notes of Trial, whereby I desire all that hear me this evening to prove their present estate and condition, whether they have this holy fear of God implanted in their hearts yea or no.

The way that I shall prescribe for Trial, shall be taken from the concomitants, or, if you will, from the effects, or that lovely train of heavenly
graces

graces that guard and attend the true fear of God.

In the first place then, where there is the holy fear of God, there is purity and holiness: *Psal.* 19. 9. saith *David* there, *The fear of the Lord is clean*: clean, not onely formally, and in it self; but effectively; *i. e.* it makes the man clean, and keeps him clean: it stands as a Porter at the door of the soul. If you should come to a Princes Court, and see a great croud about the door, you would say, The Porter is there, he stops and examines them: if at another time you see all going in as fast as they please, you will say, The Porter is out of the way. Thus where the true fear of the Lord is, all is kept within compass: we examine what goes into our hearts, and what comes out: 'tis as it were an armed man, or Centinel, at the gate, which questions all, and stops every one from entering, that is unfit: it stands as a watch-man on the tower, and looks every way, to see what is coming unto the soul. But more particularly, this holy and reverential fear of God

- cleanseth { 1. The Head.
2. The Heart.
3. The Life or Conversation.

A word or two of each of these. I shall not hold you longer then the ordinary time,

1. It cleanseth the Head, the Judgment, the Understanding, and intellectual part of man; and therefore saith the Psalmist, *Psal.* 111. 10. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*: of true, spiritual, and saving wisdom: it will, according to the measure of it, dis-

pel the mists and fogs of Error that cloud the Understanding. And what is the reason of it? the Reason is, because it is the property of this fear to make men humble: the true fear of God is an humbling grace. Now an humble man can never be an Heretick. 'Tis true, he may erre in his judgement; but 'tis but shewing him his Error, and he will quickly yeeld, and subscribe to Truth: This heart-humbling Fear wo'nt suffer him to be contumacious or obstinate. *Rev. 14. 7.* saith the Angel there, that had the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, *Fear God, and give glory to him. Give glory to him, i. e.* as some expound the place, Give glory to him, by abdicating and abjuring your heretical conceits, and erroneous opinions. A man that hath his heart possess'd with the lively fear of God, will not, cannot stubbornly persist in any Error: such a man will be convinced and taken off, when other men are wedded unto their own opinions. The fear of God hath an excellent influence this way.

2. It cleanseth the heart too: it preserves the soul in general, and keeps it holy. O Beloved, this true and holy fear of God, is a golden bridle to the soul, when it would run out unto any evil: it is like the banks to the sea, which keeps in the raging waves of corruption, when they would overflow all. *Prov. 14. 27. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death: i. e.* either from sin, which is spiritual death; or from damnation, which is perpetual and eternal death: the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from both these

these snares of death. Where this fear is not, there the heart is ready to joyn with every evil, and so to fall into the jaws of every death. Satan, that mighty hunter, hath laid snares for our poor souls in all places. The way of this world is like *the vale of Siddim*, slimy and slippery, full of Lime-pits and pitfalls, snares & stumbling-blocks, laid on purpose to maim and to mischief our souls: But now he that truly fears God, comes off without great hurt; he keepeth his heart with all diligence; he watcheth the very thoughts and motions of his heart: he will not suffer vain thoughts to lodge there, but labours to wash it from all filthiness, that so he may perfect holiness in the fear of God. This fear of God weeds hypocrisie out of the heart; pride, arrogancie, and every secret way of iniquity. *Job* was a man fearing God, and therefore he durst not once to think lustfully upon a maid: this was that which made him to refrain contemplative wickedness: *Job* 31.1.

And then 3. As this holy fear of God cleanseth the Head and the Heart, so it cleanseth the Hands too: it keeps the Life and Conversation pure. *Prov.* 3.7. saith *Solomon* there, *Fear the Lord, and depart from evil.* The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil: that, Beloved, is the definition of the fear of God. Eschewing of evil is not onely put as an effect of the fear of God, as when 'tis said of *Job*, Chap. 1.1. *that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil;* but it is put, I say, in the very definition it self of the fear of God: 'tis the nature of this fear of God, to depart from evil;

not onely from habitual and inward, but likewise from outward and practical evil; from publicke, as well as from private and secret evil. See what *Jehoshaphat* saith in his charge unto his Judges, when they were going their Circuit, *2 Chron. 19. 7. Wherefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you: take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.* q. d. This fear of God, if it be upon you, if it be radicated and rooted in your hearts, will teach you to forbear Bribery and iniquity with your hands. It was the fear of God, Beloved, that reined in *Joseph* from condescending to the wicked motion of his wanton Mistress; though he might have committed that folly, and the world have been never the wiser.

I can proceed no further at present, in the tryal of this holy fear of God. Examine yourselves by what hath been said. If, with those godly ones here in my Text, you are men and women truly-fearing the Lord; then this fear of God hath had this cleansing influence upon you, and hath cleansed your Heads, Hearts, and Hands.

Secondly: As this holy fear of God cleanseth the Head, Heart and Hand from sin: so doth it no less frame the heart to the doing of duty, and that, 1. towards God; 2. towards men. For as you heard before, the fear of God is a very extensive and comprehensive grace; it includes the whole duty of man: not onely his Negative duty, what he ought not to do; but his Positive duty too, what he ought to do.

In the first place then, this holy fear of God frames the heart to the performance of its duty towards God. And here I shall instance onely in two duties.

1. It perswades the heart to believe God and his Word. The Scripture noteth this expressly of the Patriarch *Noah*, Heb. 11.7. *By faith Noah being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, &c. Moved with fear : what is that ? i. e. with a reverent fear of that God that spake unto him: Noah's heart being touched with the true fear of God, believed God, even in those things which were not as yet seen : he believed those forewarnings of God concerning the judgment he purposed to bring upon the world ; and accordingly prepared an Ark, whereby he saved his household, and condemned the wicked world. Thus the Israelites, possessed with this filial fear, believed God and his servant Moses. You may see this clearly, Ezod. 14.31. And the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses. Pray observe it well : the people feared the Lord, &c. As Faith may be and is the ground of holy Fear : so holy Fear may sometimes draw forth acts of Faith ; it will make a man tremble as much at the Threats of his Word, as at the Strokes of his Hand.*

And then 2. As it frames the heart to a believing of God and his Word : so likewise to an obeying of God and his Word ; the holy obedience of his revealed will. *Psal. 103. 17, 18. saith David there, But the mercy of the Lord is*

from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto childrens children : to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. He describes, you see, them that fear God, to be such as keep his Covenant, and remember his Commandments to do them. A soul truly fearing God, is afraid to disobey God : his heart, with David's, will stand in awe of Gods Word. And hence 'tis, that in Scripture sometimes you finde the fearing of God, and keeping of his Commandments ; sometimes, fearing God, and working righteousness, joynd together. The former you may see, *Psal. 119. 63* *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts. Of them that fear thee, and keep thy precepts : a man cannot fear God, but he must observe his precepts.* So again, *Eccles. 12. 13.* *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter ; Fear God, and keep his commandments : for this is the whole duty of man.* The connexion of these two, shews us, that the fear of God is a principle of obedience ; they that fear him, will keep his commandments : yea, they do so in an Evangelical way : though they cannot attain unto, yet they wish well to exact and accurate obedience. The later you shall finde, *Acts 10. 35.* *But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* A man fearing God, will be active and doing ; he will be working righteousness, and that which is good.

And thus have you briefly heard, to what particular duties this Fear frames the heart towards God. I am to shew you, in the next place, how and

and in what duties it draws the heart in reference to Man. The Fear of God hath a double bond in it: a bond of Obedience to God, and a bond of Love to Men.

Well then, in the first place, the true fear of God is ever joyned with love unto our brethren. The Apostle puts so much of Religion, or of the fear of God (for they are both one) in the love to our brethren, as that in one place he makes it all Religion, yea, the very definition of the fear of God. *Jam. 1. 27. Pure religion, and undefiled before God, and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* This is Religion, and pure Religion: i. e. This is a great branch and part of Religion; 'tis a special fruit which springs from that goodly tree, The Fear of God. Now to visit the fatherless, Beloved, is more then to look upon them, and to ask them how they do: to visit them, is to help and succour them: it's like that visit, in its proportion, which Christ made unto the distressed world, *Luke 1. 68. where 'tis said, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for he hath visited and redeemed his people: or, he visited his people, to redeem them.* And then the fatherless to whose visit Religion and the fear of God leads us, are not onely poor children and orphans, whose parents are lately dead, and they not able to shift for themselves; but the fatherless are all the afflicted who want our help or patronage: every helpless and comfortless soul is an orphan without parents, and as a widow without a husband: and to relieve such, is pure Religion: herein standeth much of the fear of God. *Job 6. 14.*

To him that is afflicted, pity shou'd be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty. I finde a variety of reading upon these words: but this one reading, to my minde, gives the sense most fair and easie: *To him that is afflicted, &c. otherwise he forsakes the fear of the Almighty: whereas our Translation saith, But he forsaketh; this saith, Otherwise he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.* i.e. If a man do not shew love and pity to his afflicted brother, that man sheweth that he hath forsaken the fear of the Almighty. As love to God, so the fear of God is made exceeding visible in love to men. As *he that saith he loves God, and hateth his brother, is a lyer*, according to that, *1 Joh. 4. 20.* so, he that saith he feareth God, and hateth his brother, is a lyer also. What cares *Nabal* the churl, though *David* die at his door, as long as he may sit warm within, eating the fat, and drinking the sweet? *Nabal* hath Logick to conclude for himself, *1 Sam. 25. 11.* *Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?* But the fear of God would have taught the fool more wit.

2. The true fear of God, as it will reach a man to love his brother; so it will reach him not to vex, oppress, or brow beat his brother. An instance of this you have in God-fearing *Joseph*: see what he telle his brethren, *Gen. 42. 18.* *This do, and live: for I fear God: q. d. I intend you no hurt, although you are fallen into my hands: I fear God, and that is your security: it stands not with the fear of God, which hath taken*

taken up my heart, to oppress or wrong you : I fear God, and therefore dare not to do you any hurt : I fear the true God, the proper object of fear ; and therefore you need not to doubt of fair dealing. To the same purpose, see what *Nehemiah* saith to those merciless Usurious Israelites, that had exacted upon their brethren, *Neh. 5. 9, 10.* *Also I said, It is not good that ye do : ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies ? I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money, and corn : I pray let us leave off this usury.* q. d. Oppression and the fear of God will not stand together : it's an argument that there is little or no fear of God in their hearts, who do oppress others. *Levit. 25. 17.* *Ye shall not therefore oppress one another ; but thou shalt fear thy God : for I am the Lord your God.* Whereby is fully intimated, that if they oppress'd, they did not fear God. And when *Amalek* fell upon the Jews, and smote some of them passing thorough his Country, it is said, *He feared not God,* *Deut. 25. 17, 18.* This evil is an unnatural evil ; and so can never consist with the true fear of God.

And then 3. This fear of God will teach men to honour and obey lawful Authority : and therefore you shall finde them both joyned together, *1 Pet. 2. 17.* later part of the verse : *Fear God. Honour the king.* q. d. Where there is not due honour and obedience yeelded to lawful Authority, there is no true fear of God. Nay, Beloved, I may adde, that this fear of God will teach a man how to carry and behave himself in every estate and condition whatsoever. Nay,
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it will teach all estates and degrees whatsoever : it will teach the Poor how to carry themselves in adversity , and the Rich how to carry themselves in prosperity : the Poor it will teach to be contented with their estate and condition , as knowing that of Solomon, *Pr. 15. 16. Better is little with the fear of the Lord, then great treasure, and trouble therewith :* it will teach him to know, that contented godliness is great riches. It is not the great Cage that makes the bird sing : it is not the great estate that always brings inward joy, or cordial contentment. And then, as it will teach the Poor contentment ; so it will teach them not to envie the Rich, seeing God in his providence hath meted out unto every one the portion of his allowance ; and with this condition too, that *where much is given, much shall be required.* Hence is that , *Prov. 23. 17. Let not thine heart envie sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* Solomon, you see, describes this fear of the Lord , as an antidote or preservative against that evil disease.

And then in the last place , this fear of God will likewise teach the Rich how to carry themselves in prosperity : it will teach them to behave themselves humbly , according to that of the Wise-man , *Prov. 22. 4. By humility, and the fear of the Lord, are riches, and honour, and life. By humility, the fear of the Lord ;* so the Original runs, without the Grammatical copulative *and ;* to note unto us, that there is such a neer affinity between humility and the fear of God, as if they were one and the very same thing : they seem to be predicated one of the other, as if they were con-

convertible terms. The Rich, if they fear God, will not be proud, or disdain their brethren because poor. And then as this grace will teach them to walk humbly, so will it teach them to walk thankfully too. You may observe this, *Jer. 5.24. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the Lord our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the later in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.* One would think that the Lord should rather have blamed them for not saying, *Let us praise the Lord our God, &c.* but Beloved, the former includes the later: he that truly fears God, will not fail to be thankful.

And thus you have heard several Notes whereby you may come to know whether or no, with these godly ones here in my text, you are men and women truly fearing God. I desire now, that when you come home, you would commune with your own hearts; and compare your selves with, and apply your selves to these sundry probational Notes. And this shall suffice to be spoken of the second Use, the Use of Examination. I shall enter upon the third, and proceed as far in it as the ordinary time will permit.

And that shall be a Use of Exhortation:

Is it so, *That every true and faithful servant of God is a fearer of God?* Learn we then hence these two duties: First, to get the true fear of God; and then secondly, to grow up in this grace more and more.

I begin with the first of these.

Let every one of us labour to have our hearts
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seasoned and possessed with this grace, in the words of *Jehoshaphat*, *2 Chron. 19.7* *Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed, and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.* Give we all diligence for the attainment of this grace. Now for the better performance of this duty, I shall first lay down some Motives for your encouragement; secondly, prescribe some Means for your assistance.

The Motives shall be five or six; all which I shall run over with as much convenient brevity as may be.

1. 'Tis but just, equal, and reasonable, that we should fear the Lord our God; seeing he hath so frequently commanded it, and so often in his Word called upon us for it. Besides what texts have formerly in this discourse been alledg'd to this purpose, let me at present, for your encouragement, commend unto you two or three more. *Psal. 22. 23. Psal. 33. 8. Psal. 34. 59. Luke 12. 5.* Observe well what Christ saith there: *But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.* He commands this fear twice, you see, in one verse. Nay, as this fear is enjoyned, so doth it of right appertain to God; 'tis his due, as he is the proper, the sole and onely object of it. *Job 25. 2. Dominion and fear are with him: i. e. they are with the Lord; or, they are the Lord. Psal. 76. 11. Jer. 10. 7.* So that you see 'tis an act of justice to fear God. When we have done the utmost that we can this way, we have done but our duty.

2. As this duty is just and reasonable in respect of God, so 'tis a grace needful and necessary for us. This is that grace which enableth us unto all Christian duties: it frames the heart, as you heard before, both to the shunning of vice, as also to the embracing of vertue. 'Tis *the beginning of wisdom*, and the instruction of wisdom: 'tis a *fountain of life*: without it, we can neither begin or end any spiritual work: 'tis the beginning of all, and the end of all: 'tis *totus homo*, all of man: without it, there can be no compleatness in Christianity; and therefore saith the Apostle, *2 Cor. 7. 1.* that we must *perfect holiness in the fear of God*. The heathen Sages, as *Seneca, Socrates*, and others, they were wise men in their generation, they had many excellent and lovely gifts: but failing of this, coming short of the true fear of God, all the other did them no good: they found out indeed many excellent things, but they missed of this Pearl of great price. That wish of the Lord is very observable, *Deut. 5. 29.* *Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.* Intimating thus much, that if their hearts were once seasoned with this holy fear, then they would be able to do his will, and to observe his commandments. Without this fear of God, we shall never be able to keep one of the commands of God. So that, you see, 'tis needful to the Inchoation, Continuation, and Consummation of of grace: 'tis the beginning, middle, and end of true spiritual wisdom.

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3. As this holy fear of God is needful for us, so 'tis gainful to us, and profitable for us too. 'Tis true, the profane miscreants above my text, blasphemed to the contrary, vers. 14. *Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?* I, but the godly in my text were of another minde. What the Apostle speaks of godliness, is as true of this holy fear of God; for why? they are the same indistin& thing: now, saith he, *1 Tim. 4. 8. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* This we may verifie and truly say of the fear of God, *It hath the promise of this life, &c.* 1. Of this life, *Prov. 19. 23. The fear of the Lord tendeth to life; and he that hath it, shall abide satisfied: he shall not be visited with evil.* Security from evil in general, is promised to them that fear God: they shall be delivered from the hurt of it, though not always, I confels, from the smart of it. They shall be delivered from the evil of sin; for why? as Solomon speaks, *Prov. 8. 13. the former part of the verse: The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.* They shall be delivered from the evil of pain and sorrow too: to which purpose tends such texts as this; *Psal. 91. 5, 6, 7. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night: nor for the arrow that flieth by day: nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee.* So again, vers. 10, 11, 12, 13. Nay, they that fear the Lord shall not onely be delivered

vered out of all evil ; but they, I, and theirs too, shall be made partakers of all good : *Eccles. 8. 12.* saith the Preacher there, *Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged ; yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him.* God will be good to his Israel, even to them that are of a pure heart. *Prov. 22. 4.* *By humility, and the fear of the Lord, are riches, and honour, and life.* The fear of the Lord, you see, doth not want its present reward of riches, honour, and life. One would think this were enough to provoke any man to turn spiritual purchaser. I, but the Scripture expresseth this reward yet further, *Psal. 34. 9, 10.* *Ob fear the Lord, ye his saints : for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger : but they that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing.* I, but what shall our poor children do when we are gone ? may some say well enough : *Psal. 37. 25.* saith David there, *I have been young, and now am old : yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.* Such a thing may fall out ; but 'tis rarely seen : David in all his experience never observed it. *Psal. 112. 1, 2.* *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments : his seed shall be mighty upon earth ; the generation of the upright shall be blessed.* Many texts we have to this very purpose. And then as the fear of God hath the promise of temporal, so hath it also the promise of spiritual and eternal good things : The Lord himself will undertake to reach such a man, *Psal. 25. 12.* *He revealeth his secrets to him, vers. 14.* He will guide them
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with his counsel here, and afterward receive them to glory, as 'tis, *Psal. 73. 24.* Surely Gods salvation is nigh them that fear him, elsewhere in the Psalm. Read *Mal. 2. 5.* My covenant was with him of life and peace, and I gave them to him, for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my Name : i. e. with Levi, as appears in the former verie. Thus, Beloved, shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. So that look which way you will, upward or downward, you shall finde, that this holy fear of God is every way profitable.

4. This grace is exceeding acceptable and pleasing unto God : 'tis delightful unto his soul ; 'tis very contentful unto him. *Psal. 147. 11.* The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him ; in them that hope in his mercy. Pray mark it, the word *ratsh* in the Hebrew, is rendered *vehementer re aliqua delectari*, to be vehemently delighted in a thing. God is vehemently pleased or delighted in them that fear him. Let a mans services and duties be outwardly never so specious or costly, without this they are unacceptable to God. *Isa. 66. 2.* To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and tremble at my word : q. d. To him that feareth my Name, to him will I have a gracious aspect ; and as to him, so to his services too : but now in vers. 3. because his fear was not in their hearts, therefore he accepts none of their works. And so again, *Isai. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.* To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me, saith the Lord ? I am full of burnt offerings, &c. Why, what is the matter ? Why, my fear is not in your hearts ; and hence

hence 'tis that there is so much cruelty in your hands ; your hands are full of blood. Oh Beloved, this holy fear of God is that which gives grace and vertue to all other duties and graces whatsoever: to walk in the fear of God, is to walk before the Lord in all well pleasing. I might enlarge very far upon every one of these particulars ; but then, having many other things to speak, I should hold you too long.

Well then, in the fifth place, this grace, as 'tis profitable to us, so 'tis honourable unto us too : you may see this in the text ; these fearers of the Lord *shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day that I make up my jewels* : q. d. I will treasure and cabinet them up among my chiefest jewels : I will honour them, and preciouslly esteem and account of them, *in die quo confecturus sum peculium*, in the day that I make up my peculiar treasure, my most precious substance : my silver, and my gold ; and my gems ; so some read it. The people which avouch God for their God, to fear him, to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes ; he avoucheth them for his people, high above all nations, in praise, in name, and in honour. You may see this, *Deut. 26. 18, 19*. See yet further, what God tells his Church, *Isai. 43. 4*. So again, *Prov. 31. 30*. To fear God, is the crown of a woman ; this is that which makes her beautiful indeed, *all glorious within* : I, and it makes her honourable too ; *she shall be praised* ; she shall live and die with honour. God hath left this upon record, to the everlasting honour of *Abraham, Job*, and others of his servants, that they were men *fearing God*. How did God even

boast himself of *Job*, I, and that to the devils face ! *Job* 2. 3. This was the character that God gave of him in the former Chapter : I, but now he goeth on , and superaddes this unto his honour, *Still he holdeth fast his integrity*. As 'tis usual with Kings and great men of the world, for great services done them, especially in wars and battels, to make additions to their Titles of Honour , to give some new Motto's , or put some new Devices in the Coat-armour of those who serve them: thus doth God here deal with *Job*; and *this honour* (Beloved) *have all Gods Saints*, all that fear his Name.

6. And then last of all , as this grace is honourable, so 'tis comfortable unto us : and hence 'tis, that you finde it joyned with joy and comfort in the holy Ghost, *Acts* 9. 31. where 'tis said of the Primitive Christians, *Then had the churches rest thorowout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the holy Ghost, were multiplied*. This holy fear will free our hearts from all base and carnal fears. Carnal fear vanisheth out of the sight of holy fear , as lesser lights do before the Sun. This holy fear fills the heart with strong confidence and consolation , making the man in whom 'tis , to hold up his head in the greatest burly-burly , and to walk about the world as a conquerour, void of all fear, either what men or devils can do unto him. Hence is that of holy *David* , *Psal.* 3. 6. and again ; *Psal.* 27. 1, 2, 3. There is no peace or comfort to the wicked ; this is the portion of them, and onely of them, that fear the Lord. The ready way to live comfortable-

fortably, is to live in the fear of God : that man, and that woman, shall have comfort ; comfort in life, comfort in death , comfort in every estate and condition whatsoever.

And thus, Beloved, have you heard several Motives why you should set your selves in all good earnest , for the obtaining of this grace of holy fear. In the next place, I shall shew you what Means you are to improve and make use of to the procuring of this grace; and that shall be onely one in general, *viz.* a serious Meditation. There are three or four particulars, which I must desire of you (that are yet without the fear of God) to meditate upon.

1. Reflect upon your selves, and consider how miserable your condition is: wanting this holy fear of God, I must tell you (and you must bear with me in it) that you are void and destitute of grace ; you have not one grace, not one piece of a grace, or spark of grace in you. As where this fear of God is, there is every grace : so, where this is wanting, there is no grace. You are, as was said in the Use of Information, graceless and irreligious persons, having not the fear of God before your eyes: your heads, hearts and hands must needs be full fraught with sin: there can be nothing but wickedness in you, and wickedness issuing from you : and believe it, unless God shew you the more mercy, and put his fear into your hearts before you die, you must expect, for indeed, nothing else can be expected, but all the miseries, torments and tortures ; which are the just reward of all such graceless persons, and profane wretches, as want this holy fear. From all

which you are utterly unable to free your selves. You will be able neither to abide it, no, nor yet to avoid it. And this is your very condition, if there be any truth in this Book of God here in my hand. I could out of this Book lay out your estate into several branches; your present and future miserable estate. I profess unto you in the presence of God, a man would not be in your case for a million of worlds, if there were so many: and this you your selves would confess, if God should ever season your hearts with his fear. But I won't at present trouble you with particulars. Do but go a little apart from your families when you come home, and set your hearts upon the meditation of what hath been spoken unto you in general; as to your condition, being without the fear of God; and this very cogitation or meditation upon your present case, may be a means (if God will but bless it to any of you) to pull you out of it, and of your procurement of this grace.

But then secondly, as you are to reflect upon your selves, so likewise should you meditate upon God: let your thoughts be busied about him; and consider how he is, 1. Represented unto you in his Word: 2. How he stands described in his works.

You will say, it may be, What is spoken of God in his Word, that may perswade our hearts to fear his Name?

Friends, there are divers things recorded of God in this Book, that should prevail with you to fear before him.

As first of all, he is transcendent, supereminent,

ment, and surpassing in majesty and glory. And hence 'tis, that the Psalmist infers a necessity of his fear, *Psal. 76. 4.* saith *Asaph* there, *Thou art more glorious and excellent then the mountains of prey: or. the mountains of triumph,* (as 'tis in the Hebrew) *i. e.* the kingdoms of this world, which tear, spoil, and prey upon one another, like wilde beasts: or more particularly, the flourishing *Assyrians*, with their goodly Monarchy: Thou art more illustrious, glorious, and excellent, then all these. What then? see verse 7. *Thou, even thou, art to be feared.* And again, verse 11. *Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God; let all that be round about him, bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.* Let you hearts then, in the first place, stand in a holy awe of God, because of his great, glorious, and terrible Majesty.

Secondly, consider God as armed with infinite power and might: the Word bespeaks him able to reward you, if you do fear him; and able to punish you, if you fear him not. Servants, you know, fear their masters, because they have power over their flesh, over their bodies: I, but God hath power not onely over your bodies, but over your souls too; and therefore you should fear him. You have this inference to the fear of God implied, if not expressed, *Mat. 10. 28.* God is said to be able to consume your body and soul in hell-fire; Oh therefore fear him, upon this consideration.

Thirdly, consider God as Omnipresent and Omniscient, as one that beholds and takes knowledge of all that we think, speak, or do. *Prov.*

5.21. *For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord; he pondereth all his goings.* God is πανόφθαλμος, as one saith, all eye: to him all things are naked and open, Heb. 4.13. Psal. 139. 8,9,10. and following verses, Jer. 12.27. & 29.23. It was this very meditation, that kept Joseph in a holy fear of sinning against God, Gen. 39.9.

And then lastly, consider God too as infinitely just, and singularly careful to punish sin: and this may be a means to beget this holy fear of God in your hearts: who would not fear before this just and impartial God! See to this purpose, that sweet song of the triumphant Saints, Rev. 15.3,4.

Nay, yet a little further: if you would have your hearts seasoned with the holy fear of God, consider him as he is presented to you in his works: his hanging the heavy and massie body of the earth upon nothing: Job 26.7 his setting bounds to the proud waves of the sea. *Hitherto shall you come, and no further.* Upon this account would the Psalmist have us to fear God, You may reade it, Psal. 33.5,6,7,8,9.

2. Turn your thoughts upon those particular judgements God hath executed upon others for our warning and caution. Psal. 119.120. saith the Prophet there, *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee: I am afraid of thy judgements.* When one childe is whipt in a School, the rest will tremble. Thus should it be with you, when you see others punished. This is the second particular meditation, which may serve as a means to bring you unto this holy fear, which I have so much spoken of. I come to the third and last; and with

with this I shall conclude this present discourse.

3. All you that are yet void of this holy fear of God, meditate, in the third place, upon the general judgement, and the unconceivable terrour of that last and dreadful day, when (as the Apostle speaks) *the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the element shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, with the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.* Knowing the terrour of the Lord in that day, I do earnestly perswade you to fear the Lord in this. *Felix* (though a Pagan) trembled, when *Paul* discoursed of this great day, *Acts* 24.23. nay, the devils themselves shake and tremble, when they think of it; and won't you? How is it that you can think of that day, wherein the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God, and who do not fear before him? The Preacher upon this very ground, namely, because then God will *bring to light the hidden things of darkness*, perswades us to fear God: 'tis *Eccles.* 12 13, 14.

And thus have I shewed you what means you should improve for your obtainment of this holy fear. And truly, if God had revealed unto me any more excellent way, then you have already heard; I do so much desire your everlasting good, as that I should not conceal it from you. Let this therefore suffice for the first branch of the Exhortation, which hath been directed to those who are yet without a holy fear of God in their hearts. I should proceed unto the second, and

reflect then upon you, whose hearts are already seasoned with this holy fear; you I should exhort to grow up more and more in this grace; and lay before you likewise (to this end) some motives, and some means. But I shall put these things over unto the next opportunity.

I proceed unto the second Duty; and that shall be prest and inculcated upon you whose hearts are already seasoned with this holy fear of God. And you I do earnestly exhort to abound and to grow up in this grace more and more. It is not enough for you to get this fear planted into you; but you must *increase* therein *with the increase of God*: you must go on, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God*. And here, by way of Motive and Inducement, I shall refer four or five particulars unto your most serious consideration. Pray attend them diligently.

The first shall be taken from the nature of this holy fear. The true fear of God is of a growing, of an increasing nature. He that grows not, and goes not forward in this grace, had never yet this grace in truth Pro.4.18. *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more & more unto the perfect day.* A man truly fearing God, sets forth betimes in the morning, and travels to meet the day: he proceeds from vertue to vertue, from knowledge to knowledge, from grace to grace, until he become a perfect man in Christ Jesus. Being once posselt with this grace, he will waxeth brighter and brighter, until at length he come to shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars in heaven for ever and ever. It may be, as the fairest sun may sometimes be overcast and

and darkned with clouds, so the piety and holiness of a man truly fearing God, may upon occasion be over-clouded, through violence of outward temptation, and strength of inward corruption: but yet, through mercy, these mists are dispelled, and he shines afterward far more brightly, and runs a more swift and settled course in the practice of sanctification. *Job 17.9. The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.* The words are a circumlocution describing the same person who was before called fearing God, upright, innocent, holy: now saith *Job*, he shall hold on his way, he continues his course, both in the holy motions of his Spirit towards God, and in the holy actings of his life towards man. And as a man fearing God is in a good estate, so shall he go on in a good way. The goodness indeed of hypocrites is as the morning cloud, and goeth away as the early dew, *Hos. 6.4.* the wind scatters the morning cloud, and the rising sun exhales the early dews; thus the goodness of the hypocrite is gone: but the goodness of the righteous, and of the man truly fearing God, like the goodness of God, of whom it is, endureth in its proportion continually: nay, such a man holds on not onely in fair way, and good weather; but in stormy weather, and ragged ways, when his way lies among sharp stones, & ragged rocks, thorow briers and thorns: yea, I may say when his way lies among bears and lions, he will on: The righteous shall hold on his way: and then it follows, *And he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.* The words are a circumlocution,

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on, *ut prius*: he shall, saith Job, be stronger and stronger: in the Hebrew it is, he shall adde strength; he shall proceed from one degree or step unto another. What strength? why spiritual strength, answerable to that, *Psal.* 84. 7. *They go from strength to strength*: or, *from company to company*: i. e. from one good company to another, still gathering goodness; and they go as the best go, from Duty to Duty, from Ordinance to Ordinance, from Praying to Hearing, to gather grace and strength: every grace hath strength; and the more grace, the more strength: till we come to that which is more strictly called strength of grace. Nay, as it was said of the Israelites, that the more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew, *Exod.* 4. 12. they multiplied in number, they grew in strength and stature; their oppression was their addition in temporals: 'tis even so, Beloved, with all true Israelites in spirituals, the more they are afflicted and troubled, the more they increase.

And then as this is the nature and quality of men and women truly fearing God; so 'tis the nature of the true fear of God; where ever this is put into the heart, it will grow: and therefore in Scripture you shall finde it compared to things of a growing and increasing nature: as, 1. to waters issuing out from the sanctuary, *Ezek.* 47. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Now this, saith Mr. Deodate in his Annotations, represents the progress and increases of grace and true fear of God in believers of small beginnings. 2. It is compared to a grain of Mustard-seed, which proves a great tree,

tree, *Mat. 31.31,32.* They likewise resemble it to the Stone that smote the Image, which became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth, *Dan. 2.34,35.* So then, this is the first Incentive to the Duty in hand: grow up in this grace of the fear of God, because if true, 'tis growing. By this you may come to know whether you fear God with a true and lively fear: the true fear of God lives, and therefore it must needs grow.

But then in the second place, this is that which God requires and commands, yea, that which he expecteth and looketh for from our hands; namely, that we should grow up more and more in this grace. Hitherto I may refer all those Scriptures wherein we are exhorted to grow in grace in general, or in any particular or individual grace whatsoever; because, as I have often told you in the former part of this Discourse, the fear of God is an extensive or comprehensive word, including all and every grace. For texts referring to our growth in grace, or in the fear of God in general, reade *1 Cor. 14.12.* *Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church.* *ἵνα περισώσῃτε,* so 'tis in the Greek: 'Tis a metaphor taken from rivers of water, which the further they run, the broader they are. Seek that ye may excel in spiritual gifts and graces: *i. e.* that ye may abound in them. So *1602.15. 58.* — *Always abounding in the work of the Lord:* In the work of the Lord, *i. e.* in all actions belonging to your heavenly vocation, and to the true service of God. See how the Apostle prays
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for the Ephesians, Eph. 3. 18, 19. *that they may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God.* Many Wits run riot in Geometrical notions about these Moral dimensions: and whereas Naturalists give us but three dimensions of a Body; Longitude, Latitude, and Profundity; the love and wisdom of God have Altitude added, which is a fourth. All these dimensions serve onely to shew the immensity both of the love and wisdom of God. Take this onely in passage; and so we might that expression too, *To know the love of God which passeth knowledge*: the meaning is, to know so much of it as is knowable: the love of God is past the knowledge not onely of Nature, but of Grace; because 'tis infinite. But this is not the thing that I urge this text for: the passage which is to my purpose, and which I would insist on a little, is that in verſe 19. the latter part of it; *That ye might be filled with the fulness of God.* Divines distinguish of a twofold fulness. There is (say they) an universal fulness; and there is a modified or qualified fulness. For a creature to be universally so full as God is, is impossible: as he is infinite, so his fulness is infinite; and a finite creature is not capable or receptive of any such fulness. But now take this in a qualified or modified sense, so we may; and 'tis ordinary to be filled with the fulness of God; *i. e.* with all fulness accomplishable or attainable by us: thus we ought to be filled with the fulness of God. We are not onely enjoined to
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get some grace, or some fear of God; but 'tis our bounden duty to aspire to, and endeavour after the perfection of it, and after augmentation and growth in it. And to this end too, is that, *2 Pet. 3. 18. Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Αυξανατε.*

This shall suffice to be spoken of those texts which conduce to the growth in grace, or in the fear of God in general. I shall likewise briefly touch some texts which require an abounding in the several branches of this holy fear: as,

1. We are commanded to abound in saving knowledge, in true spiritual wisdom, *Col. 1. 10.*

2. We should grow in faith: that which is lacking to our faith, must be supplied and made up, *1 Thess. 3. 10. 2 Thess. 1. 15.* We should labour to grow both in the assurance of faith, and in the exercise of it: in the full assurance of it; using all diligence that we might get and keep the full assurance of faith and hope unto the end; labouring to be established, rooted, and soundly grounded in our particular assurance of Gods favour in Jesus Christ, and of our own eternal salvation: *Col. 2. 6, 7. Heb. 10. 22.* And then for the exercise and improvement of faith; we should learn every day to live by faith: let faith be upon the wing in all the occasions and occurrences of our life; holding fast our confidence, and striving to be examples one to another in our faith in God; according to that, *1 Tim. 4. 12.*

3. We must abound in love: *Phil. 1. 10.* bearing with, and forbearing one another; seeking to enlarge our acquaintance with such as fear God; and to do them good.

4. We

4. We must grow in mercy, and the fruits of mercy: 2 Cor. 8. 7. *Therefore (as ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us) see that ye abound in this grace also:* he means, tender heartedness, or bowels of compassion.

5. We should grow in patience, meekness, and lowliness of minde: 1 Jam. 1. 4.

I might instance contentation, heavenly mindedness, contempt of the world, and several other parts of this fear of God: but by these few links, you may guess at the whole chain, or series of this grace. So then, the strength of this second Motive lies thus: God requires and expects that we should grow up more and more in the fear of his Name; he calls for it at our hands.

In the third place, this is the end of our union with, and implantation into Jesus Christ, namely, that we should in all things grow up into him who is the head: To which purpose, reade Eph. 4. 15, 16. *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of it self in love.* The importance of which words is this, namely, that we are joyned and united unto the Lord Jesus Christ, that so of his fulness we might all receive grace for grace: that look as an infant groweth not in one, but in every member; so we should grow every way, in every member, and in every particular

cular grace appertaining unto the new creature. We must not walk by halves, or obey God with reservation; but grow up unto full holiness. As from the natural head, sense and motion floweth into the body; so there is internal influence of grace from Christ the Head, into the whole mystical body: every true believer receives a vital and quickning power or virtue from Christ; even as a graff set into a stock, partaketh with it in the sap and life of it. Unless we walk in Christ, we can never assure our selves that we have received Christ. If we shall sit down and rest in a mediocrity and scanty measure of grace, and of the fear of God; except we are still on the growing hand, labouring to arrive to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, we cannot say that we are yet put into Christ. A soul (as one notes very well) that hath union with Christ, will not be like *Hezekiah's* sun, which went backward; or like *Joshua's* sun, that stood still: but like *David's* sun, that great and glorious gyant of the heavens, that like a bridegroom comes out of his chamber, and as a champion that rejoyceth to run a race. If he be joynd to Christ, he will joyn grace to grace, according to that of the Apostle *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 6, 7. And thus briefly of the third Motive.

In the fourth place, as God hath given us his Son, to the end we should grow up in his fear; so hath he to the same end given us the Spirit of his Son: he hath sent forth his Spirit into our hearts, not onely for the conveying of grace to us, but for the strengthening and increasing of grace in us. Observe how the Apostle prays for the

the *Ephesians*, Chap. 3. 16. *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.* This is the very office of the Spirit; he is sent of God to this purpose; not onely to give us a being in grace, but to strengthen us in grace: he doth not onely make us *new men*, but *living men* in Jesus Christ. As the soul is to the body, so is the Spirit to the soul: the Spirit furnisheth and enableth every faculty; it enlightens the Understanding, it rectifies the Will, it sanctifieth the Affections; it filleth a man with joy, fear, love, and all spiritual graces, which give strength to the inner man: it enables us to command the winds and storms of our sinful lusts, and irregular passions. By the power of this Spirit, we may eject and cast out all Satans temptations, quench all his fiery darts: In a word, by the mighty energie and efficacie of this Spirit, we are enabled to every good word and work. And hence 'tis, that sometimes the Spirit of God is called *The power of the most High*, Luk. 1. 35, 36. *the Spirit of power* too, 2 Tim. 1. 7. But, why *the power of the most High*? why a *spirit of power*? Because of that effectual power which the Spirit puts forth into the hearts of the elect; not onely for their conversion from sin to grace, but for their confirmation and growth up in grace, and in this fear of God. So that now (Beloved) unless we do grow up in the fear of God more and more, we do as much as in us lies to frustrate Gods end in sending to us his Spirit; nay, we cannot conclude that we have as yet received the Spirit.

And

And then in the fifth and last place, 'tis to this end likewise, that God hath given to us, and continued to us his holy Ordinances. Look as the sun and rain are given to make plants to grow; so the Ordinances are given to make our souls to grow in grace, and in this holy fear of God: more particularly, for this purpose it is, that God hath 1. given us his Word; and 2. his Sacraments.

1. His Word is given us to make us fruitful, *Isa. 55. 10 11.* Hence is it, that the people of God are compared to grass, and tender herbs, which grow and flourish, which are fed and bring forth fruit, when watered with the rain; 'tis *Dent. 32. 2.* A godly man, saith the Psalmist, is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, *Psal. 1. 3.* he is planted and placed where Gods Ordinances are; and what then? *he bringeth forth his fruit in his season.* 1 *Pet. 2. 2.* saith the Apostle there, *As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.* They are ignorant of the intent and end of the Word, that do not grow by the Word. The Word is appointed not onely to beget us, but also to make the Saints perfect. For this, you have an excellent text, *Eph. 4. 1 1, 1 2, 1 3.* The end of the Ministry is not onely to plant grace, but to strengthen grace; and therefore you shall finde, that when the Apostles had established Churches, they returned to confirm the disciples hearts, *Acts 4. 21, 22.*

And then secondly, as to this end God hath appointed his Word, so to this end likewise hath he instituted and ordained the Sacraments:

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as they signifie, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the Covenant of grace, the benefits of Christs mediation; so do they confirm and strengthen grace: this doth the Sacrament of Baptism, and this doth the Sacrament of the Lords Supper: this is the very use and end of them. Though indeed the Papiſts tie the grace of God inseparably to them, and make the *opus operatum* matter of sufficient virtue, and ascribe Divine power to the very outward signs or elements; yet 'tis most clear and certain, that Jesus Christ set them up in his Church, to the end that through the co-operation of his Spirit, they might be effectual unto our spiritual growth; as I could shew you at large, were it needful.

And thus have you heard what Reasons there are, why you whose hearts are already seasoned with the holy fear of God, should grow up and abound in this grace more and more.

I come in the last place to the means whereby we may be assisted and enabled to and in the performance of this weighty, but yet incumbent duty. And here I might in the first place urge upon you a careful, conscionable, and faithful improvement of the foregoing Ordinances, the Word and Sacraments; which, as I told you but now, were ordained to this very end and purpose. Did you but holily employ your selves in the Word and Sacraments, you that have this holy fear of God already put into your hearts, would grow up and abound in the same yet dayly more and more. But I shall enlarge no further upon them. There is one Ordinance of God more, which is very conducive
unto

unto this great end. A Word or two of that, and so I shall conclude this second Point.

If you that already fear God, would thrive and proceed in this grace, why then make a constant and assiduous use of faithful and fervent prayer: desire God, who is able to make all grace to abound, who is the *finisher*, as well as the *author* of grace, that he would cause this great and comprehensive grace to abound in you. *Jam 1.5.* saith the Apostle there, *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him.* This *if* doth not argue doubt, but onely inferreth a supposition. But why doth the Apostle speak with a supposition? is there any man that doth not lack wisdom? I answer: such expressions do more strongly aver and affirm a thing; such suppositions imply a concession; as, *Mal. 1.6.* *A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master. If I then be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?* q. d. you will grant I am a father and a master. So here, *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God:* you will grant, you all lack wisdom. The Apostle, I confess, if you look upon the circumstances of the text, by *wisdom*, intendeth wisdom or skill to bear affliction: but yet we may also take it generally for every grace: *If any of you lack wisdom, i. e.* if he come short of, or be defective in any grace, let him ask it of God: God will have every thing to be fetched out by prayer: He is the fountain, yea, an unexhausted fountain of all grace; and therefore saith the same Apostle, in the same Chapter, verse 17.

Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights; with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Pray mark, Every good and every perfect gift; all spiritual blessings. 'Tis true, all common gifts come from divine bounty: but the Apostle here intendeth special blessings, as appeareth by the attributes of them, in that he calls them good and perfect; as also, because these best suit with the context: as every good, so every perfect gift; i. e. such as do any way conduce to our perfection; not onely initial and first grace, but all the progresses in grace; not onely the beginnings, but the gradual accesses of them. All these now are from God, from above, from heaven: and if perfection and growth in every grace is from above, why then likewise in this grace, wherein I am now perswading of you to grow perfect. Thus more generally.

But more particularly, as to the grace in hand, considering that to fear God is a supernatural gift; go to God for it, and pray with David, Psal. 86. 11. later part of the verse: *Unite my heart to fear thy Name*: q. d. my heart of it self is wofully divided and scattered up and down upon lying vanities; Oh now do thou unite my heart to fear thy Name. The Septuagint render it, *ἑνωσον τὴν καρδίαν μου* make my heart one; i. e. apply it onely and constantly to thy fear: let not my heart be divided between thy fear, and rhines of a lower consideration; let it not be floating between two different ways, as if I had two hearts; but *unite my heart to fear thy Name*: let the fear of thy great Name, be the one onely thing

thing that my heart is carried after. *Eliphaz* al-
leadgerth the neglect of this duty of prayer, as
the reason why men cast off this fear of God:
'tis, saith he, because they *restrain prayer* from
God, *Job* 15. 4. He that throws up the duty of
prayer, nay, he that shortneth or abateth prayer:
for the word *garang* in the Hebrew, signifieth not
onely to withdraw or keep back, but to lessen
and diminish. So that, I say, whosoever holdeth
prayer from God, or lesseneth and abateth pray-
er, must never expect to grow up in this grace.
Nay, to *fear* God, and to *seek* God, are fre-
quently in Scripture, especially in *Psal.* 34. used
for one and the same thing; as you may observe,
if you will but compare together verse 9. and 10.
of that Psalm: *this* being the ready way to *that*.
Do but see, in the last place, concerning the be-
nefits and contents of the new Covenant, *Ezek.*
36. 37. one clause of which covenant is this: *I*
will give them one heart and one way, that they may
fear me for ever: I will put my fear into their hearts,
that they shall not depart from me. Now saith the
Lord, verse 37. *I will yet for this be enquired of by*
the house of Israel, to do it for them.

And thus, Beloved, have you heard the means
both how you may get this holy fear of God;
as also, how you may grow up in this grace more
and more. I am loth, by reason the time is al-
most spent, to enter upon a new Point at this
present: and therefore, in the last place, I shall
adde some few signs of this growth, and so com-
mend you to God, and to this Word of his
grace.

Well then, here the Question will be; How
a soul

a soul may come to know whether or no he do thrive in this grace. And here in the first place, I might touch at that which was spoken of, both in the Motives and in the Means.

1. A man may know it by his conscionable use of the Means and Ordinances of growing. If we will but measure unto God in sincerity, in Hearing, Reading, Praying, and Receiving; no doubt but God will measure unto us, in the plenty of his blessing. We need no more doubt whether our souls do grow in this grace, if we can bring constant affections to the means; then we need, whether the bodies of our children would grow, if they have good Nurses, and do suck the breasts well. To this purpose tend such Scriptures as these: *Isa. 64. 5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways.* Those that remember thee in thy ways? what is that? *i. e.* in thy glorious dispensations: we may refer it either to the dispensations of the rod, or to the dispensations of the Word. Those that remember God in either of these ways; those that make a holy use of either, them will God meet: *Thou meetest those that remember thee in thy ways.* And what, will he shake them only by the hand? no, he will shake them by the heart too; he will bless his Ordinances to their hearts, and make them profitable and of great consequence to their growth: as it is yet more fully expressed, *Mic. 2. 7* later part of the verse: *Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?* *i. e.* My words will do good to him; and as other good, to this good; it will make him grow, as you have it,

1 Pet. 2. 2. So then, that is the first sign of growth.

2. We might discern this further, by our disrelishing of sin, by our distasting of the world. According to the measures and degrees that the sweetness of sin decays and abates in us, doth grace grow and thrive in us. As there is no *vacuum* in Nature, so neither is there in grace. As corruption increaseth, so this grace of the fear of God increaseth.

3. We may know this likewise by our faith and confidence in God: Jer. 17. 7, 8. *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is: for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit: y^e d. he shall grow.*

4. We may know it by our constancy and frequency in good works, either of piety or mercy: for faith our Saviour in this case, Matth. 13. 12. *Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath.*

5. We may know this likewise by our frequency in communion with God, by our delight in drawing neer to him: this is the way to grow up to an holy temple in the Lord: and in the Lords temple you may be sure all will prosper well. I might enlarge upon these several symptomes: but the ordinary time is spent, and therefore a word or two more, and I have done.

In the sixth place, we may try our growth in

this grace, by our humility: look as we thrive in the one, so do we thrive in the other. God hath promised not onely to give grace, but to give *more* grace to the humble; *Jam. 4. 6 But he giveth more grace; or, he giveth abundance of grace.* Humble persons shall not onely have a being in grace, but they shall receive increases of grace.

7. And then last of all, we may know likewise whether we grow in this grace, by our love and affection to the godly. This love is the very *bond of perfection*, Col. 3 14. 'Tis not onely a means of that true and perfect union which ought to be among believers; but 'tis a means of their growth, yea, and a trial of their growth too, in any other grace.

And thus have I finished this Point, as also the first property or periphrasis of those godly ones here in my text: they were such as *feared the Lord*. I should now proceed unto the second, they were such as *thought upon his Name*. But of this another time.

For the opening of which property, I shall consider,

1. An Object,

2. An Act.

The Object: The Name of God.

The Act: Thinking upon.

A word or two of each, and so I shall come to the Observation.

First then, what are we to understand by the Name of God?

Beloved, the Name of God, among other significations in Scripture, hath four special ones.

1. 'Tis

1. 'Tis taken for God himself: the name of a thing, is put for the thing named, *Psal. 44.* *Through thy Name will we tread them down that rise up against us.* Through thy Name, i. e. through thee: *Through thee, and through thy Name,* are here the very same. *Through thy Name,* here in this verse, is added merely exegetically, to expound the meaning of *through thee* in the beginning of the verse. And so again, *Psal. 48. 10.* *According to thy Name, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth.* The sense of the words is this: Thou art praised like thy self; as thou art in thy self, so thou art, or at least oughtest to be praised by thy people. 'Tis frequent in Scripture to put the Name for the Person: you have it clearly, *Acts 1. 15.* *The number of Names together were about an hundred and twenty:* i. e. the number of persons: so many persons, because numbred by their names.

2. The Name of God is in Scripture often put for the Attributes of God, and essential properties; for the power of God, wisdom of God, mercy of God, justice of God, and the rest; as we could easily shew you from Scripture. But I would hasten to the Points.

3. The Name of God signifies his Ways, Ordinances, or Worship: *Jer. 7. 12.* *But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my Name at the first, &c.* What is that? i. e. where I first set up my publike worship. And the reason why the Name of God is put for his Ordinances & Worship, is, because as a man is known by his proper name, so is God known by his proper Worship. And hence 'tis, that often
times

times false worship is called the setting up of a strange god: this is evident, *Psal.* 81. 9. and so elsewhere in many places. And then

4. And lastly, the Name of God signifies that reverence, esteem and honour which angels and men give unto God; as you know amongst us, the report and reputation that a man hath amongst men, is a mans name; what men speak of him, that is his name: such a one, we say, hath a good name; such a one hath an ill name: *i. e.* men speak well or ill of such persons. *Gen* 6. 4. when *Moses* describes the gyants, he saith they were *men of renown*, in the later part of the verse, the Hebrew is, *an sa hashem*, they were *men of name*: men of name, by an Hebraism, are men of renown. *Numb.* 16. 2. — *Famous in the congregation, men of renown*: the Hebrew is, *These are men of name in the congregation*. Because the name of a man, is the opinion he hath amongst men: as a man is esteemed, so his name is carried, and himself is accepted in the world. Thus, I say, the Name of God is that high esteem, those honorable apprehensions which good angels and good men have of God. Such as the thoughts and speeches of men are, for the celebration of Gods glory and praise; such is his Name in the world.

Well then, now the question will be, which of all these is intended in the text, when 'tis said of these fearers of God, that they thought upon his Name. Truly I know not how to exclude any of the e four: I suppose all of them are here intended: they thought upon God, and all other things which had any print or image of God stamped

stamped upon them; his Attributes, Ways, Ordinances, Worship, Honour; all these they thought upon. *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkned and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name.* And thus much of the Objects.

I shall speak a little of the Act which was conversant about the Object, and then give you the Observation. The Act, you see, is thinking upon; *And that thought upon his Name.* The word in the Original is put participially, 'tis *kohebka uleko shaba shemo*; *And for them thinking upon his Name.* Now the root or verb *hahabbh*, whence this participle comes, is rendered by *Calvin* two ways: 1. To have in esteem or great price. These godly ones here in my text, were such as had an high and honourable esteem of the Name of God. This I confess is well expounded, and the Original is clear enough for it. But yet, in the second place, 'tis as well, if not better expounded according to our Translation: *They excogitated, or, they thought upon his Name.* And because this is fully as clear, if not clearer, from the Original text, as the other; I shall not vary from our English Translation. And this word *hahabbh* doth not signifie simply or nakedly to think; but to set the head and heart on work to finde out something; and carries the intention of the minde with it, as I could shew you, from *Jer. 18. 18. Ezek. 28. 10.* and other places. Well then in fine, take the meaning of the Prophet to be this: *That thought upon his Name; i.e. that se-*
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riously meditated, that busied and bended their best thoughts upon God, and the things of God; upon God, and upon the things that were of divine concernment. Thus succinctly and briefly, without any further enlargement. So that now having opened this property of these holy ones, take the Doctrine or Observation, thus :

It is, and it should be the practice of all them that truly fear God, to meditate diligently upon God, and upon the things of God. All such whose hearts are posselt with the true fear of God, will be excogitating and thinking upon his Name.

I shall clear this from Scripture, and then come to the Grounds and Reasons of it. Reade *Prov. 11. 23. The desire of the righteous is onely good. Taavah Haddikim: The desire of the righteous: or, the affection of the righteous is onely good: i. e. so far as he is righteous or spiritual: he delights in the law of God after the inward man: the main stream of his desires, the course and current of his heart, runs upon God and godliness. Although when the flesh gets the winde and hill of the spirit, all is not so well carried: 'tis oftentimes with a Christian, as 'tis with a Ferry-man; he plies the Oar, and eyes the shore homeward, where he would be; yet there comes in the interim a gale of wind, that carrieth him back again: So, I say, although a Christian in this viatorous condition, is not so happy as to have his heart altogether empty of evil thoughts and desires; yet that is the thing he strives unto and breathes after: and God looks more upon the desires of his servants, then upon*

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on their performances: every man is, in the account of God, as good as he desires to be. So that in this sense, well might *Solomon* say, *The desire of the righteous is onely good.* So again, *Pro. 12. 5. The thoughts of the righteous are right.* What is that? why the meaning is, that he feeds his thoughts upon the best objects: and if worse break in, as sometimes they will, he justles them out again, rids the room of them, and will not suffer vain thoughts to take up their residence or lodging within him. An instance hereof you have in *David*, *Psal. 119. 113.* *David* was a man (as you may finde thorowout the Book of the Psalms) whose heart was much set upon God, *Psal. 168.* he was a man very much busied in holy and heavenly meditation: the ways, and words, and works of God, were the chief objects of his meditation, as you may finde almost every where. Another example of this you have in the Church, *Isa. 268.* 'Tis said of these godly ones in my text, that *they feared the Lord, and thought upon his Name:* and saith the Church here, *The desire of our soul is to thy Name, and to the remembrance of thee:* i. e. to all the signs, gages and testimonialls which thou hast given us of thy grace, by thy words, works, or the like; the desire of our soul is to the remembrance of these: or, we desire to remember these in our whole souls. To the same purpose is that of the Church, *Psal. 44. 17, 18, 19, 20.* So that now from all these Scriptures, and many more, it appears clearly, that it is, and should be the practice of all them that truly fear God, to meditate diligently upon God, and upon the things of God.

God. Take one text more, which shews that this should be the practice of all that fear God: as it is, so it ought to be their practice; they are enjoined to it by command, as namely, *Phil. 4.8.* whence you may perceive what the objects of our thoughts ought to be: the things that we think upon, must be true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; they must be heavenly and spiritual things. And so again, *Col. 3.2.* *Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.* The word for *set your affections*, in the Greek, is *ὑποτίθετε*, *Tὰ ἀνω ὑποτίθετε*. and we may render it, *minde* or *think upon* supernatural things, upon things that are above, things that are of a heavenly and celestial concernment.

And thus you have heard the Point made good from Scripture. I shall in the next place give you the grounds and reasons of it, and proceed therein further, as far as time will permit.

Well then, in the first place, they that fear God, will be thinking upon his Name; their thoughts will be taken up with, and exercised about the things of God, because they know that God knows the secrets of their hearts: as he that makes a Watch, knows every winding and turning in the Watch; so he that made our spirits, and is the father of our spirits, knows all the motions and contrivances of our spirits. Nay, 'tis the sole priviledge of God, to know the thoughts: the heart is his peculiar, which none can unlock, or look into, but the most High: *Jer. 17. 10.* *I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins.* Now what is the heart that God search-

searcheth, or what doth God search for in the heart? The heart is nothing else but the treasury of our thoughts; and God searcheth for nothing else there, but our thoughts: either simple, as they are in our meditations; or compound, as they are in our affections. *David*, you shall finde, ascribes this glory to the Lord, *Psal.* 139. 2. *O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me: thou knowest my down sitting, and mine up rising; thou understandest my thought a far off: i. e. thou knowest all my outward motions: but is that all? no, saith he, thou knowest my thoughts a far off.* Our thoughts are evident to God, even before they are. Our thoughts are said to be a far off, when they are not thought: yet then they are as nigh to God, as they are to us when we are thinking them, even actually present to him. Nay, our thoughts are as audible to God, as our words are to men: he hears the language of our spirits, and what our hearts say, when our tongues are silent. One man knows not the meaning of another mans thoughts while he is speaking, unless he speak his thoughts, as some do not: but now let the tongues of men be never so cross to their hearts; and what they speak, not a light to discover, but a shadow to darken their thoughts; yet God knoweth them. 'Tis said of Christ in the Gospel, *Matth.* 9. 4. that he *knew their thoughts*; and this was an unanswerable argument of his Divinity, or that he was God. Onely God, or as Christ was God-man, can reach the thoughts of man: and he knows as well what is in them, as what is without. And this the godly well know;

know ; and hence 'tis , in the first place , that they are so thoughtfull of his Name.

But then secondly (*Psal. 44. 17, 18, 19, 20.*) the godly will be thinking upon God, out of love, and strength of affection to his Name. 'Tis the nature and property of love , to set the thoughts awork upon the thing or object beloved : according to that in the Proverb, *Ani-mus est ubi amat , non animat* : the minde of a man is not where it lives , but where it loves. Pray observe that passage, *Cant. 1. 3.* the later part of the verse : *Thy Name is as oynment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.* Christ hath his name , both in Hebrew and Greek, from ointments ; and these three words, *Messias, Christ,* and *Anointed* , are all one in signification. Now when the holy Ghost , in the mouth and ministry of his faithful servants, shall take of Christs excellencies, as it is his office, you know, to do, and hold them out to the world ; when he shall hold up the Tapestry, as it were, and shew men the Lord Jesus Christ, with an *ecce virum*, behold the man , that one Mediator betwixt God and man, the man Christ Jesus ; when they shall see him in his Natures, in his Offices, Works, and in the blessed effects of all : when his Name as oynment is poured forth ; this cannot but stir up wonderful love in all good souls : *therefore do the virgins love him.* By *virgins*, we are to understand the faithful, so called for their spiritual chastity. They love him for the odours of his good oynments ; and out of their dear love and respect which they bear to him, they will be continually thinking upon him :
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they have tasted and seen how good the Lord is: they have heard it not onely by the hearing of the ear, but their hearts are experimented in it: God hath shed abroad his love, that part of his Name, in their hearts, by the holy Ghost; and therefore they cannot chuse but love him back again; and loving him, be much in contemplation or meditation about him.

3. The Saints are set upon thoughts of Gods Name, because they are instructed and enabled thereunto by his holy Spirit, who is their domestic Monitor, and sweet inhabitant. 'Tis true, what the Apostle saith, *2 Cor. 3. 5. Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing, as of our selves: but our sufficiency is of God.* The meaning of it is, that all our strength and help lies in him: we daily finde a want in our selves; and God, as it pleaseth him, lets out from his sufficiency unto us, now a little and then a little: we are ever receiving from him, and enabled by his Grace and Spirit to do what is done: I say, the Spirit disposeth the heart to this holy meditation, and that two ways: 1. By enlightning the heart: 2. By enlarging the heart. But the time being past, I shall refer what remains to some further opportunity.

1. I say, the Spirit enlightens their hearts. The first and primary work of the Spirit, is to beat out, as it were, new windows in the dark souls of men, and to put in a principle of new light thereby; giving the soul some signs of God, some sense of his sweetness, some glimpse of his glory. And hence 'tis, that the holy Ghost in Scripture is sometimes called a *spirit of wisdom*

and understanding, a spirit of counsel and of knowledge, Isa. 11.2. sometimes a spirit of wisdom and revelation, Eph. 1.17. sometimes a spirit of illumination, Heb. 6.4 Now the Spirit is so called, from this effect which it hath upon the heart, because the Spirit causeth a spiritual and heavenly light to shine about our mindes, by which, spiritual things are made manifest to the eye of our understanding; as by the light of the Sun, bodily things are made manifest to the eye of our body. *The Spirit*, (saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 2.10.) *searcheth the deep things of God*, and reveals them to us, and shews us the back parts of God, though somewhat obscurely, as through a grate onely; or darkly, as through a glass. In this life we know but in part. And then,

2. The Spirit having possessed the heart, he enlargeth or wideneth the heart towards God, and the things of God: it enables us to captivate our thoughts to the obedience of Christ, to conform them to the severaignty of his grace, to the rules of his Word, and the remembrance of his Name. Nay,

3. The Spirit sanctifieth the heart, and so puts it upon a continual fresh succession of holy thoughts. The whole spirit, soul and body of a Christian, is sanctified thorowout. God writes his Law in their hearts, stamps his image upon the spirit of their mindes, makes them partakers of the divine nature; creteth a new nature, a blessed frame of grace: And hence have they an ability given them of holy thoughts and meditations: for as the man is, so will his thoughts, dispositions, meditations and affecti-

ons be. Hence is that of the Prophet, *Isa. 32. 8. But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.* A man of a noble, liberal, and generous spirit, will carry his heart out after worthy and noble things. Nay, hence is that of our Saviour, *Matth. 12. 35. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things.* As from the old and unregenerated heart proceed evil thoughts; so from the new and sanctified heart, proceed holy and sanctified thoughts, gracious considerations of, and holy reverend respects to God, and to his Name. That is the third Reason of the Point. *It is and should be the practice of all them that truly fear God, to meditate diligently upon God, and upon the things of God:* because the Spirit doth to this purpose enlighten their understandings, and possesseth and sanctifieth their hearts.

4. But then last of all, *it is and should be the practice of all them that truly fear God, to meditate diligently upon God, and the things of God,* because all that truly fear God, stand in a marvellous neer and dear relation unto God. Neer relations, you know, will minde one another. God and his servants are neerly related: he is their friend and father, their God and guide, their Prince and portion, their shield, and their exceeding great reward. Nay, Beloved, he is their all in all, the stay and the strength of their hearts for ever: and therefore it cannot be, but their hearts must run much upon God, and upon the things of his kingdom. Nay, a little further: every faithful servant of God, every true believer, hath resigned and given up his name to God;

he hath devoted himself to his fear. Mark what holy David saith, *Psal. 119. 38. Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.* Believers have as it were sworn themselves to the service of God: *I am thy servant, I am thy servant*, saith the same holy David oftentimes in the Psalms: they love the Lord with all their soul, with all their heart, and with all their strength: and as for the Name of God, they flie unto it in any difficulty and distress, as unto a Garison and strong Fort or Tower, *Prov. 18. 10.* The righteous know that the Name of God is so deep, that no Pyoner can undetmine it; so thick, that no Cannon can pierce it; so high, that no Ladder can scale it: and hither they run for refuge: Nay, they walk in this Name, as in a Garden or Gallery: *Mis. 4. 5. We will walk in the Name of the Lord our God for ever and ever:* they resolve to walk in the Name, *i. e.* By the Laws, and under the view of the Lord their God, who is God of gods, and Lord of lords: they rejoyce and delight in it, as in all treasure, *Psal. 119. 14* Now, brethren, sum up all together in a word, and then you shall finde the force of this Argument.

Can the fearers of God rejoyce in his Name, run unto it upon all occasions, walk in it; and yet not minde it; and yet not have their hearts set upon it? This is impossible. Can they, I say, vouch him for their God, set him up for their Sovereign, converse with him as a friend; and yet not think upon his Name? this cannot be well conceived.

And thus you hear what the grounds of the Point

Point are. Let us now make some Use of it.

I shall improve it four ways:

1. For Information.
2. For Increpation.
3. For Examination.
4. For Exhortation.

In which Uses, I shall proceed so far this day as time will permit. I begin with the first, the Use of Information.

1. Is it so, *That it is and should be the practice of all them that truly fear God, to meditate diligently upon God, and upon the things of God?* Take we then hence notice, That those who do not habitually, daily and diligently think upon God; that make not his Attributes, Ways, Ordinances, Worship and Honour, the matter of their meditation; these, I say, are excluded out of the number and society of the true fearers of God. Yea, the want of this holy and heavenly meditation, is laid down in holy Writ, as the Badge, Cognizance, or Character of wicked men. You may finde it, *Psal. 10. 4. The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts: i. e. he doth not regard or care for God; he doth not willingly meditate or think of God: he maintains no correspondence or communion with him in his inner man: peradventure God, like an unbidden or unwelcome guest, may put himself in his thoughts, and move in his minde; he may present to his minde some manifestations of himself in his justice and holiness; yea, of his truth, long suffering, and goodness: but this proves a trouble, and becomes a pain unto a wicked man,*

Wicked men neither desire or accept acquaintance with him in any of these. Wicked men are weary of the presence of God : so *Job* describes them, Chap. 21. 14. they think it best for them, when God departeth. 'Tis true indeed, Saints know not how to live a comfortable day, much less to be happy, without him : but now wicked men know not how to live a comfortable hour, much less to be happy, with him. The Church indeed saith to God, *Leave us not*, Jer. 14. 8. and God saith to her, *Wo to you when I depart* Hos. 9. 12. 1, but wicked men say to God, *Depart from us* ; trouble us not ; when shall we be eased and disburdened of his presence ? As there is nothing so joyous to the righteous, so there is nothing so grievous to the wicked, as to have God neer them. If they can once banish the thoughts of God, then they think they live indeed ; and till then, they reckon their lives as a kinde of death. Thus the Apostle describes the Gentiles before their conversion ; they were such as were *without God in the world*, Eph. 2. 11, 12. All wicked and unregenerate men, with these Gentiles, live without God in the world. Nay, Beloved, be informed from the Doctrine in hand, That to be weary of the presence of God, and to expel God, and the remembrance of his Name, out of the heart, is one of the strongest arguments, and highest demonstrations, that a man is wicked.

Onely to love and pray for the presence of God, is the surest sign of a gracious heart ; but to desire and wish the absence and departure of God, must needs conclude, and positively argue the
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the heart to be most ungracious. See what *David* saith, *Psal. 27. 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after: i. e. I will earnestly pursue, I will indefatigably and unweariedly prosecute the grant or concession of this desire, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, &c.* In these sacred strains of divinest Rhetorick, was *David's* soul carried out after God: God and his Name was the one thing, the onely thing he longed for: without God, all was nothing with him: in him, he had all: his presence was enough and sufficient for him: all companies, multitudes, throngs and crouds of men, yea, of Saints or good men, was but solitariness and widowhood to him, without the presence of God. And this was the highest ascent of *David's* holiness: well then, pray tell me, is it not the lowest descent of unholiness, the greatest brand and argument of wickedness, to be troubled at the presence of God? Is it not a full and plenary conviction of a carnal minde, of a wicked man, to think it long until God be gone, to deprecate his presence, and to urge his departure? Oh, I must acquaint you, that this frame of heart is the very blackness of hellish darkness; 'tis the express image and character of the devils person. Though peradventure such are not posselt with, yet are they under the possession of the evil spirit. Reade that relation, *Matth. 8. 28, 29.* It is the devils torment to be neer Christ, or to have

any appearance of God in him: and certainly they are neereſt the devil, they live next door to him, to whom the thought of God, and the remembrance of his Name, is a torment; or who, like thoſe *Gaderenes* to Chriſt, in verſe 34. of the fore-named Chapter, come and beſeech him that he will depart out of their coaſts; that ſo, if it were poſſible, they might never more either hear or think of him.

But you will reply, Why, do you think that any are ſo wicked, as to thruſt God from them, or to baniſh him out of their thoughts? or if they would, were it poſſible for them ſo to do?

I might, I confeſs, frame two Objections upon what hath been ſaid in this Uſe: and for the more methodical improvement of the Point, I don't care if I do: and to theſe onely I ſhall ſpeak at preſent, and ſo conclude.

Fiſt then, concerning the impoſſibility of Gods departure from a wicked man; the Apoſtle arguing with thoſe at *Athens*, ſaith, *Acts* 17. 27, 28. *He is not far from any of us*, good or bad: how then can wicked men put God from them?

To this I anſwer: Though wicked men cannot put themſelves far from the eye and knowledge of God, he being Omnſcient and Omnipreſent; yet may they put God far from their thoughts: though they may ſee God in their Conſciences, yet they never found him in their Affections. As wicked men are far from the favour and love of God, ſo are they far from love and affection to God. God may be and is near them, in regard of his common and general preſence;

sence; but they do not desire the special presence of God in their hearts; that is a burden to them : and hence 'tis that they say in their hearts, that there is no God, Psal. 14. 1. *The fool, i. e. the vile, wicked, and worthless person, saith in his heart that there is no God.* A fools bolt, we say, is soon shot: it may be he doth not always speak it with his mouth; but his heart speaks it; he thinks there is no God: with these wicked ones before my text, he denies the Attributes, Ways, Ordinances, Providence, and Service of God, whatsoever is included in the whole Name of God: he saith, *'Tis in vain to serve the Lord, and there is no profit in seeking to him.* So that, I say, 'tis clear, that though wicked men cannot put themselves out of the intuition and inspection of God: yet they may and do put themselves far from the thoughts of God, and from the remembrance of his Name.

But then secondly, it will be objected, Are any so wicked, as to forget God? are there any so vile, as to put the Name of God out of their thoughts?

Yes, Beloved, that there are: every wicked man doth it more or less: so Job speaks in the fore-mentioned text, Job 21. 14. *They say unto God, Depart from us: for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* He speaks of wicked men indefinitely; of all, yea, of every wicked man: every wicked man saith to God, *Depart from me.* This I could evidence to you in sundry passages and practices of wicked men: but for brevity sake, I will exemplifie onely in that one set down in that text, Job 21. 12. Wicked men make it
ap-

appear that God is not in all their thoughts, because they desire not the knowledge of his ways. As the ways of a wicked man are always grievous to God; so are the ways of God always grievous to wicked men; therefore they desire no acquaintance with, no knowledge of them: they are a very loathing to their souls; they are rough, sharp, sad, and unsuitable to their spirits and genius: Wicked men, as they think, are provided of better ways, of ways more easie, smooth, plain, pleasant; and therefore they have no manner of desire to Gods ways: *we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* The word in the Hebrew signifying *desire*, is rendered also to *take pleasure or delight in*; because those things which we delight in, are most desired by us: and when they say, *We desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, more is intended then the bare negative of their desire: we may resolve this Negative into an Affirmative, thus: We dislike, yes, we hate the knowledge of thy ways. But what are those ways of God which finde so little acceptance & entertainment with wicked men? In general, by the ways of God, he intendeth not those ways in which God walketh; but those which God hath made for man to walk in; as namely, the ways of his providence and outward administrations; the ways of his commandments, or those rules of life in and by which we ought to walk, and regulate our whole course, the ways of his Works, the ways of his Word; the ways of his Worship; wicked men desire not the practical or experimental knowledge of these. And thus much of the first Use.

I come

I come to a second Use, and that shall be a Use of Increpation.

2. Is it so, that it is and should be the practice of all them that truly fear God, to meditate diligently upon God, and upon the things of God? This Point looks sadly and sorrowfully upon such as think basely, unworthily, and dishonourably of God: upon such, who, instead of holy and heavenly, entertain atheistical, blasphemous, unbelieving, and rebellious thoughts. I shall give a touch upon each of these, and so come to a third Use.

Some have gross, earthly, and terrene conceits of God; they become *vain in their imaginations* about him, as those spoken of by the Apostle, *Rom. 1. 23*. Thus ignorant persons, who fancy God to be some old man sitting in heaven, with a Crown on his head, and a Scepter in his hand, administering his kingdom as an earthly Prince. Others, though they conceive God to be a spirit, and not a bodily substance; yet they in their thoughts rob him of his essential and inseparable Attributes. 1. Some deprive him of his Omnipresence, thinking that God is not present in all places; David could say, *Psal. 139. 7, 8, 9, &c.* *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, &c.* but now, wicked men, on the other side, are brought in speaking of God, as if he were shut up in heaven, and had nothing to do in the world. *Job. 22. 12, 13.* *Is not God in the height*

height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are. And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge thorow the dark cloud? So again, *Psal. 44. 7.* Some deny in their hearts his Omniscience, as if God did not know all the transactions of men. *Psal. 10. 11.* David speaking of the wicked mans thoughts, tells, *He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten; he hideth his face, he will never see it.* So much the Prophet *Isaiah* insinuateth, in that wo which he denounceth against wicked men, *Isa. 29. 15.* *Wo unto them that seek deep to hide counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us, and who knoweth us?* Some deprive God of his justice, thinking that although they proceed in the practice and often repetition of sin, yet God will not punish them according to the cominations and threatnings of his Word. If you doubt whether or no there be any such imagination in mans heart, reade *Deut. 29. 19.* where *Moses* saith, *And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to adde drunkenness to thirst.* Nay, saith *David*, *Psal. 10. 3.* *The wicked boasteth of his hearts desire, and bleisseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth: or, we may reade it, The covetous bleisseth himself:* So much is implied in that of the Lord unto the Jews, *Jer. 7. 9, 10.* *Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods, whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my Name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?*

Some

Some again think unworthily of God, by denying his providence, whereby he ordereth and disposeth of all things in the world; as if God regarded not his people; as if he cared not which way things go. So did these wicked ones above my text: so did they of whom the Prophet *Zephaniab* speaks, *Zeph. 1. 12. that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.* Others again rob God of his purity and holiness; they conceive God to be wicked as themselves are, because he keeps silence at their sins: *Psal. 50. 21.* or else because he doth not presently execute wrath upon sin and sinners, *Eccles. 8. 11.* Others, and not a few, conceive God to be made up altogether of mercy: they think he will save them, and not destroy the works of his own hands, though they live never so wickedly. Others deny the truth of God, and make him a lyer; as if God would not accomplish either what he hath promised to his people, or threatened against his enemies: so did those wicked ones of whom the Apostle *Peter* speaks, *2 Pet. 3. 3, 4.* Others, in the last place, do not onely think basely and unworthily of God; but they think thoughts against him, such thoughts as are directly opposite to his Name: they take up high and haughty imaginations, such as exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, and obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ: of which thoughts you reade, *2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.* Nay, they have thoughts of high treason, and open rebellion against heaven; saying as *Pharaoh* did, *Exod. 5. 2. Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?* or as they, *Psalms 12. 4. With our*
tongue

tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? or as they, Jer. 44. 15, 16, 17. As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the Name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee: but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth of our mouth.

Thus, Beloved, and many other ways which I might name, do wicked men think dishonourably of God. Now, as I told you in the beginning of this Use, the Doctrine which I have in hand looks very wisely and sowerly upon all these. As it excludes them out of the society of the fearers of God, so it brings them under heavy wrath, guilt, and punishment. God will one day discover and lay open before the whole world, angels and men, those vile thoughts that wicked men have had of him, and against him, in their hearts: he will set their iniquities in order before them, and their secret sins in the light of his countenance; as 'tis, *Psal. 90. 8.* he will bring every one of these secret thoughts into judgement, *Eccl. 12. 14.* And that none might be ignorant of this, he makes proclamation thereof, as it were in open Court, by the voyce of his holy Prophet, *Jer. 6. 19.* I desire all those that are guilty of sinful thoughts against God, to observe this text well, and to lay it home unto and upon their hearts this evening: *Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts.* The heavy wrath and vengeance of Almighty God, is both the just deserr, and the certain issue and event of evil thoughts: inward distempers, and mental abominations, shall not go unpunished.

And

And this shall suffice to be spoken of the second Use, the Use of Inceparation. I proceed to a third, and shall make what progress in it the ordinary time will give me leave; and that shall be a Use of Trial and examination to every one that hears me this evening.

3. Is it so, *that it is and ought to be the practice of all them that truly fear God, to meditate diligently upon God, and upon the things of God?* Let then every man and woman learn hence to make an estimate of his and her spiritual estate, by the quality and disposition of their thoughts. For 'tis most certain, that as the man is, such are his thoughts; and as the thoughts are habitually and ordinarily, whether good or evil; so is the man. Thoughts are called the possessions of the heart, *Job 17. 11. The thoughts of my heart*: in the Original 'tis, *the possessions of my heart*. Now they are called *possessions of the heart*, two ways: 1. In a passive, and 2. in an active sense. Passively, because thoughts are possessed by the heart; the heart doth inclose and hold our thoughts; the heart is the proper vessel and receptacle of thoughts; the heart naturally is the soil and seat of thoughts: there they are planted, and there they dwell. And then they are the possessions of the heart actively: for as thoughts are possessed by the heart, so thoughts do possess the heart. Thoughts are full of activity: they trouble, and they comfort the heart. Look what our thoughts are, such is the estate of our hearts: if our thoughts be quiet, our hearts be quiet; if our thoughts be unquiet, our hearts be unquiet: if our thoughts be joyful, our hearts

rejoyce; if our thoughts be sad, our hearts are sorrowful. And therefore 'tis said in the Gospel, *Luk. 24. 38. Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?* i.e. Why do troublesome, disconsolate thoughts arise in your hearts? 'Tis as natural for thoughts to arise in the heart, as 'tis for water to rise in a spring or fountain. Christ did not chide because thoughts, but because such thoughts did arise in their hearts. We cannot hinder our thoughts from thinking, no more then we can hinder the fire from burning, or water from wetting. They are the possessions of our hearts; and being the possessions of our hearts, we may easily judge of our estate and condition by them. Purity in the inward parts, is the most sound, and infallible evidence of our fearing God. Whatever evil is practised or committed in the life, proceeds from the heart, *Mat. 15. 9. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, &c.* So again on the other side, whatever good is acted in the life, proceeds from the heart: *Out of the heart, says Solomon, are the issues both of life and death.* And therefore I say again, Examine your estate by your hearts, and by your thoughts, which are the possessions of your hearts.

Now there are two ways how a man may try his thoughts: 1. By the causes of them; and 2. By the effects of them: A word or two of each, and so I shall conclude.

1. Try your thoughts by the Causes of them.

Are they put in by God and his Spirit? doth the Spirit of God raise them up in your hearts; or else are they injected and cast in by the devil?

vil? And so I might enlarge my self, in shewing when our thoughts are formed and framed in us by the Spirit of God, and when thrust in by the devil: but that would be a field too large for me: and therefore I briefly pass it by.

2. Try your thoughts by the matter and substance of them. Are they holy, heavenly, and gracious? Carnal men are projecting how to spend their days and moneths in buying, in selling, and getting gain: the fool in the Gospel is thinking of enlarging his barns, of pulling down his houses, and building greater, *Luk. 12. 17, 18.* this is that which engrossed all his thoughts. One Apostle describes such men thus: *Minding earthly things.* Phil. 3. 19. another thus: *Having an heart exercised with covetous practices,* 2 Pet. 2. 14. *With covetous practices,* i. e. with earnest contrivances how to promote their gain and earthly aims. But now men and women fearing God, they are for gracious projects; they are thinking how they may be more thankful; saying with *David*, Psal. 116. 12. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* They are thinking how they may be more holy and spiritual, how they may be more useful and serviceable to God, how they may be more fruitful in every good word and work. So that, I say, in the second place, try your thoughts by the matter of them.

3. Try them from the form and fashion of them. Are they notional, floating, and accidental; or are they studious, solicitous, and diligent thoughts? Do you sit, as it were in the door of your hearts, on set purpose to enter-

tain good thoughts, as *Abraham* was wont to sit in the door of his tent, to entertain strangers; or do they fall in onely by the by, collaterally, and besides the intention? These holy men in my text did not onely think upon Gods Name casually, or by chance; but they did it seriously and in good earnest, and stayed up their hearts against all discouragements.

4. Examine your thoughts by the duration and continuance of them. Are your good thoughts fixed, settled, constant and permanent; or are they flitting, fugitive, transient, and temporary onely; as soon gone as come, like a flash of lighting in the air; like the stony ground, whose fruit was no sooner ripe then rotten; or like the grass upon the house top, which the Psalmist speaks of, which withereth afore it groweth up? And then last of all,

5. Try your thoughts by the effects which they work in you. Do your thoughts of Gods presence, purity, and holiness, make you to tremble, and afraid to sin; thoughts of his mercy and patience, lead you to repentance; the thoughts of his power and all-sufficiency, work you to a close, even, and uniform walking with God; the thoughts of heaven, wean you from the earth; the thoughts of the vanity of life, fit you for death? Do the thoughts of the instability and uncertainty of temporal things, edge and quicken your desire after eternal things? Are your meditations driven to that issue which *David* were, to make you turn your feet unto Gods Testimonies; to have respect to his Ordinances, to his Ways and Precepts? Are your
thoughts

thoughts thus improved? are your thoughts improved to such holy ends & purposes as these are? I beseech you, when you come home, to commune with your own hearts, & endeavor to conclude somewhat of your estate and condition by your thoughts. And so much of this Use, and for this time, I proceed unto the fourth & last Use of this Point, and that shall be for Exhortation.

4. Is it so, that *it is and should be the practice of all them that truly fear God, to meditate diligently upon God, and the things of God?* This Doctrine then calls upon all the true fearers of God, to be much in meditating and thinking upon his Name. And here, for the performance and better performance of this great and necessary duty, I shall lay down before you in the first place some Motives; Secondly, some Means; and thirdly, some Rules or Directions.

I begin with the Motives; and the first shall be taken from the necessity of the duty. 'Tis necessary in a double consideration: 1. in regard of God: 2. in regard of our selves.

1. In regard of God: he requires and commands the duty. See what God saith to Joshua, Josh. 1. 8. *This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.* One would think it should rather have been said, *This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy heart, but thou shalt, &c.* of if not so, then thus: *This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt speak of it day and night.* Meditation is too high a Muse for the mouth. But, Beloved, because there

ought to be much meditation about the Law of God, before a word of it comes out of the mouth; therefore the Lord saith, *This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.* The meaning of it is this: As often as thou shalt speak, thou shalt meditate; thou shalt not speak rashly: it shall not be the work of thy tongue alone, but of thy minde and tongue together. Now as in this text, the Lord requires holy conference, of which I shall speak (God willing) in the next Point: so doth he likewise require holy meditation; *Thou shalt meditate therein:* This carries with it the full force of a command. So again, *Prov. 6. 20, 21. My son, keep thy fathers commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: binde them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.* The phrase of speech is borrowed from Garments or Jewels. The meaning of it is: Lay them up as safe in your thoughts, tie them as fast to your hearts, by holy meditation, as men do their clothes; nay, as they do their chains and jewels, to their bodies: or else deal with them, by frequent meditating upon them, as men do by those things which they set down in their book or table, that so they may keep a precise memorandum of them. The like injunction you finde given, *Phil 4. 8.* the text which I alledged in the confirmation of this Point. So again, *1 Tim. 4. 15.* saith Paul there to Timothy, *Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profitting may appear to all:* What things? why, the things of God and his Gospel. So then, this duty is necessary in respect of Gods
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positive and peremptory command.

Secondly, this duty is necessary in respect of God; because 'tis he that induc'd us with reasonable souls, with thinking faculties: 'tis he that hath given us an ability this way; I mean, an ability or faculty to think or meditate. The Apostle tells us, *Acts: 17.28. In him we live, and move, and have our being.* 'Tis in God that we move; I, and that with the motions of our mindes, no less then with the motions of our bodies: *in him*; i. e. by and through him, through his power and goodness, that we are acted and moved in our minds; *2 Cor. 3.5. Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing, as of our selves: but our sufficiency is of God.* The Apostle, you see, instanceth in this very duty of thinking, and of holy meditation. 'Tis not in our own power to think, much less to think a good thought: all our sufficiency this way is from God. Now then, if it be God, as you hear, that hath put into us thinking faculties; 'tis needful then that we should return them backupon him again, by thinking seriously and industriously upon his Name. Nay, you shall finde, that upon this very ground, because God hath given us our spirits, our souls, and the severall faculties of them; therefore we are to glorifie him with them. This is evident, *2 Cor. 6. 20. the later part of the verse: Therefore glorifie God in your body, and in your spirits, which are Gods: q. d. your spirits as well as your bodies are Gods, therefore glorifie him in your spirits. And can we better glorifie God in and with our spirits, then by frequent thinking upon his Name?*

Nay,

I 3

Thirdly,

Thirdly, consider that God will account with us for our thoughts : we must one day be as responsible or answerable to God for our thoughts and meditations , as for any other things or talents whatsoever : *Eccles. 12. 14.* At that day of revelation (for so the day of account is sometimes called in Scripture) we shall be made like a transparent , pellucid ; and diaphanous body ; and all shall be laid naked and open : the books of Gods Omniscience and mans Conscience shall be opened : thy secretest thoughts, thy most reserved, retired, and sequestred meditations, shall be as legible in thy forehead , as if they were written with the most glittering sun-beams upon a wall of Chrystal. Not only mens words and actions, but their thoughts , are all in print in Heaven , and God will in that day read them aloud in the ears of all the World ; although no heart in the earth be privy to them but their own. That is worth your diligent observation to this purpose , which you finde , *1 Cor. 4. 5.* *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts.* What are more dark or hidden then mens inward thoughts ? we may call them *hidden things of darkness* : yet even these , will God bring to light , these will he make manifest at that day. The Apostle , as I conceive , speaks this for the encouragement of the Saints ; he encourageth them to the very duty I am now upon : though they have been called hypocrites , and disgraced ; though they have had the dirt of a thousand scandals cast in their

their faces, yet there is a day coming, when God will take an account of your thoughts; your reproaches shall be wiped away, and your thinking upon the Name of God shall be brought in open view.

And then fourthly, as God will in justice recompense wicked men, for the evil and sinful managing; so he will in mercy reward the fearers of his Name, for the right and holy management of their thoughts. When *David* entertained but a thought or purpose of building an house for God, although God forbade him to do it; yet he rewarded that thought and determination of *David*, in his seed, 2 *Sam.* 7. 16. So when the Prodigal purposed with himself to return home to his Father, you may see how it was rewarded, *Luk.* 15. 18, 19, &c. and therefore saith the Apostle, in the text before alledged, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. later part of the verse, *Then shall every man have praise of God.* What, every man? Will God praise those who are praiseless? will he praise the proud and covetous, the drunkards and unclean? will he flatter men in their sin, and sow pillows of commendation under their elbows? No: the Apostles meaning is, every man that is praise worthy, every good and faithful man; every true believer, all sincere and honest hearts, whose thoughts, counsels, and meditations, have been aright; every such a man shall have praise of God.

And thus you see that this duty is necessary; as also, how many ways 'tis necessary in respect of God. This is evident likewise in the text that I am now upon.

But then in the second place, this thoughtfulness upon the Name of God is needful in regard of our selves. Hereby, in the first place, we shall evidence unto our own souls and consciences, that we are men and women truly fearing God: This is in my text set down as the property or distinguishing character of holy and godly men, that they *thought upon his Name*: Nay, they are conjoynd inseparably; they were such as feared God, and *thought upon his Name*. Those beasts under the Law which chewed not the cud, and divided not the hoof, were not to be eaten of; they were unclean. I could give you divers significations and applications of dividing the hoof, and chewing of the cud: *Willet* in his eleventh Question upon this Chapter, alledging many: I shall at present speak onely of that which conduceth to my purpose. The parting the hoof in twain, signifieth the right discerning of the Word and Will of God, when we are able to judge of it, not carnally, but spiritually: 2. Chewing of the cud signified the serious meditation of the Name and Law of God day and night; which is the food of our souls. Well then, as those beasts were unclean which divided not the hoof and chewed the cud; so those men and women are spiritually unclean, unholy, and unsanctified, who do not discern spiritual things, and often recal them to their mindes, to meditate or to ruminate upon them.

2. This duty is needful in respect of our selves, because thoughts are the original and principles of action; meditation is the rise and foun-

fountain both of communication and conversation; of words and of practices: it causeth the stream or current of both these to run either clear or muddy. The progress or method to action is, you must know, in this manner.

1. The Thoughts do excite and stir up the Affections; Affections do kindle upon Thoughts, as Tinder doth upon the striking of a spark of fire.

2. The Affections they carry and command the Will, even as windes do the ship.

3. The Will commands all the inferior powers to execute or to put in act that which the Thoughts have suggested, the Affections seconded, and it self accepted.

Now then, forasmuch as thoughts carry such an influence and tendencie unto action, good Reason why we should holily and religiously employ them.

Thus far of the second Motive to the duty. I shall run over the rest with more brevity, and proceed as far in them as the remaining time will give me leave.

Well then, in the second place, serious and diligent meditation upon the Name of God, as 'tis a needful, so 'tis an excellent duty, such a duty as will transform us into the image of God, from glory to glory. 2 Cor. 3. 18. saith the Apostle there, *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glaſſe the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* As we by looking upon the glory, holiness, and excellencie of God; so likewise by meditating upon the glory, ho-
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liness, and excellencie of God, are changed into the same image: *i. e.* we are made conformable unto him, we receive as it were the engravings of holiness upon our souls, by meditating upon the holy One. As by a good concoction and digestion, our meat is incorporated into, and assimilated untous; so, by meditation, which is spiritual concoction, we are assimilated and made like unto that Name upon which we meditate. We read, *Exod. 34. 29.* that when *Moses* had been with the Lord upon the mount, his face did so shine, that *Aaron* and the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him. Beloved, as long as a man is in the duty of holy meditation, as long as he is thinking upon the Name of God, he is with God, he is in communion and fellowship with him: and Oh, this will set a glistering lustre and brightness upon his heart; it will cause the face of his heart to shine. Let me tell you, for your encouragement, that the way to be an excellent Christian, is to be a holily contemplative Christian. Holy meditation will render you, with the Kings daughter, *all glorious within*. I shall enlarge no more upon this.

In the third place (and so I shall conclude for the present) Holy meditation is a sweet and comfortable exercise. *David* met with marrow and farness, honey and honey-comb, yea, with surpassing delight and pleasure in this duty: and therefore saith he, (*Psalms 139. 17.*) *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!* We may take the words two ways: 1. *How precious are thy thoughts!* *i. e.* how

how sweet and precious are these thoughts of mercy which flow from thy heart to me, which pass from thy soul to mine? But this acceptation of the words is not for my present turn; and therefore in the second place, you may take them thus, with Mr. *Ainsworth*, in his Annotations upon the place: *How precious are thy thoughts! i. e.* The thoughts that I have of thee, the thoughts that are raised out of my heart up to thee; Oh how precious are they! Divine meditation (Beloved) is a very heaven upon earth; 'tis an having of one foot already (if I may so speak) in the porch of heaven; 'tis a fore-taste of eternal life: 'tis to the Saints, as the fiery chariot was to *Elizah*; by it they are transported from earth to heaven in their spirits; nay, so far ravished in their thinking upon Gods Name, as that sometimes they know not those things that are before them, they minde not those persons that are about them; but being in the body, they are as it were carried out of the body, with spiritual ravishment: they taste such incomparable sweetnesse in the good Name of God, as that they are not able to express them: even as the chewing of our meat makes us to taste much more sweetness in it; so this heavenly practise of meditation causeth us to feel much more sweetness in the Name of God. Meditation ever brings with it delight: therefore see how *David* doth knit them together, Psalm 119. 15, 16. *I will meditate in thy precepts, and will have respect unto thy ways. I will delight my self in thy statutes; I will not forget thy Word.* That holy object about which a mans thoughts

thoughts are much conversant, he cannot but take much delight and complacencie in. As it argues love to the object, *Psalm 119. 97.* so, I say, it argues delight in the object.

And then, in the last place, to conclude the Motives; this is an exceeding profitable and advantageous duty; and that divers wayes: I will name onely two or three of them.

1. Meditation turns the promises into marrow: it not onely tasteth, but cheweth the promises and manifestations of God unto his people: and therefore 'tis not onely sweet and comfortable, as I told you before; but it is profitable too. Read *Psalm 63. 5, 6.* *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.* As there is all manner of pleasure, so is there all manner of profit in the believing meditations of God; they make the promises as a Royal feast to faith. Meditation is not onely an effect of faith, but 'tis an excellent means to strengthen faith.

2. 'Tis profitable for the avoiding of evil: Meditation prevents the intrusion of vain and sinful thoughts, of foul and fleshly lusts; which otherwise would swarm in the soul: it leaves the devil no room for his black and hellish suggestions, for his blasphemous injections. It defeats the world, which otherwise would be ready to catch us, to get in to defile our hearts.

Nay, 3. It promotes our spiritual good: hereby we get into acquaintance with God, the fountain of all goodness: hereby we attain unto

a greater measure of spiritual wisdom, grace, holiness; we prove tall and experienced Christians, filled with all knowledge.

Nay, this holy meditation, in a word, is profitable to others; for why? it fits us for holy and Christian conference.

Thus, and many other ways, is this Exercise profitable. Well then, you have heard what an encouragement there is to the practise of this duty. I come, in the next place, to shew you the means whereby you may be enabled to the performance of it.

The Means shall be of two sorts.

1. Negative.
2. Positive.

By Negative, I intend those sins or impediments which we must labor against, if we will fruitfully think upon the Name of God.

In the first place, avoid Pride, and a conceitedness of a sufficiencie in your selves to conceive of God, or to think of any thing else that is good. You have heard before, what the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 3. 5. Pride hinders the right improvement of every holy duty, and communion with God in every holy duty. God indeed hath promised to impart himself and his secrets to the humble, *Psalms* 25. 9. but God will have no acquaintance with proud persons; he looks upon them afar off, as the Psalmist speaks. This causeth a mans going out from God indeed, but it hinders his drawing nigh to God, as in other exercises, so in this of holy contemplation. God commonly leaves such to doat and busie their brains about Questions and vain Dis-

pu-

putations, which tend to nothing but strife and ostentation. See what the Apostle speaks of a proud and self-conceited man, 1 Tim. 6. 4, 5. *He is proud: what follows? knowing nothing, but doating about questions, and strifes of words, whereof cometh envie, strife, railings, evil surmisings; perverse disputings of men of corrupt mindes, and destitute of the Truth, supposing that gaine in godlines. From such withdraw thyself.* It is just with God, to leave proud hearts to unprofitable studies.

2. If you will religiously meditate upon the Name of God, take heed, as of Pride, so of Passion: Passion carries us out of our selves, and carries us too from the business and duty before us. As an angry mans discourse runs wilde, so his thoughts and cogitations run wilde also. As the passions of the Concupiscible appetite, and intemperancies of youth, carry a man beyond his bounds; and therefore the Prodigal repenting, is said to *come to himself*, Luk. 15. 17. so likewise do the passions of the Irascible appetite. Anger disorders and discomposeth the spirit. Passions in the minde, are like a tempest in the air, which do exceedingly disturb the minde. Many a man, like a ship at sea, hath been over-set and sunk with the violent gusts and whirlwindes of his own spirit. As a turbulent heart can neither hear nor pray as it ought; so so neither can it think or meditate as it ought. Passion unfits the heart to and for any religious duty.

Well may such a one *exact folly*, as Solomon speaks; but I warrant you, while he is thus dis-

distempered, he wo'n't lift up many holy thoughts; these do require a sedate and quiet spirit, free from the confused hurrie of troublesome passions. And therefore, in the second place, see that you eschew passion. And then

3. If you would conscionably perform this duty, beware of earthly-mindedness. Worldliness or earthly-mindedness divides and distracts the heart, fills it with noysome lusts; but indisposeth it to the thinking of God, or upon the things of God. This corruption, if nourished, will eat all manner of goodness out of the heart. The Apostle tells us, *1 Cor. 7. 32, 33. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married, careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.* Implying, that an excessive and an immoderate engaging of the heart in the world, is one main cause why a man cannot take care for the things of the Lord as he ought to do: such a man, such a woman, cannot attend upon the Lord in any duty, without distraction. *Mat. 6. 24.* saith our Saviour there, *No man can serve two masters: i. e. two masters of contrary interests, and who issue forth contrary commands.* Every wicked man serves more masters than two: he is a servant to lust; yea, he serves *divers lusts and pleasures, Tit. 3. 3.* but yet he serves not that One, who is infinitely better, and more deserving our service than all: and serving Mammon, he cannot serve God as he ought, in any service; and therefore not in that

that which I am now speaking of. *Col. 3.2.* Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth: *q. d.* If your thoughts run upon the things of the earth, they won't carry you out after things above.

And thus much of the Negative means, or rather, the hinderances of this holy meditation. I come, in the next place, to speak of the Positive helps: and with them I shall conclude this days publick Exercise.

1. If you desire to think upon the Name of God, then begin the day with the thoughts of him, and of his mercies renewed upon you, not onely every morning, but every moment. This seems to be *David's* constant course, from such texts as these are, *Psal. 5.3. Psal. 59.16. Psal. 88. 13.* and the like you may finde in many other places, that to begin with the thoughts of God in the morning, is the way to put the soul into an heavenly frame and temper the whole day following. We have a saying amongst us, that *the morning is a friend to the Muses*: *Aurora Musis amica*, i. e. the morning is a good studying time. I am sure, the morning is a great friend to the Graces: 'tis the best time to begin our thoughts and meditations; it will dispose the heart to and for communion with God all the day after. And withal, remember to close up the heart with God, when you go to bed at night; and, if possibly you can, fall asleep out of some heavenly meditation. So will your heart be in a better plight when you awake. He that thus raketh up fire over-night, (as one saith) shall finde fire again in the morning. That is the first Means to the Duty in hand.

2. Guard

3. Guard and watch over your hearts all the day long, that they be not drawn from God, or from the thoughts of him, either by any corruption from within, or temptation from without. *Prov 4.23. Keep thy heart with all diligence:* defend it from all inroads and incursions from the flesh, world and devil. Keep but the heart well in tune, and then it will not so easily go out from God. Beloved, if you suffer your hearts to be scattered up and down, upon earthly vanities, it will be far to seek when you should wait upon God, either in Prayer or Meditation; as a wilde horse turn'd to range up and down into a wilde Common, that can hardly be raken when he should be saddled. As you should be in the fear of the Lord all the day long; so should you be raising, elevating, and winding up your hearts to God all the day long. You should hold communion with God, even in the duties of your particular callings, and civil employments. *Phil. 3.20. saith the Apostle there, Our conversation is in heaven.* The word *μαίναμα*, *conversation*, in the Greek, is properly rendred thus: *Our civil life, or our civil conversation is in heaven:* q. d. we exercise our general callings in our particular; we go about earthly businesses with heavenly mindes; extracting, by a Divine Alchymie, heavenly meditations out of earthly objects and occasions. And I conceive there is something to this purpose in that of the Apostle, *1 Cor. 7.39. where he saith, Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, abide with God.* How doth a man abide with God in his particular calling? not onely

by keeping within the bounds and limits of that calling wherein God hath placed him; but also executing the duties of it as in the sight of God, by minding God in the several passages and occurrences of it. This also is to abide with God in our calling: and this we must do, if we will be conscionable to the duty enjoyed.

3. Would you have your thoughts to be set upon the right object, upon God and goodness, with these godly ones here in my text? Then hold a strict hand over your thoughts: be often in and upon the examination of them. Evils, you must know, begin first in the thoughts, *Mat. 15. 19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* First, evil thoughts; and what then? murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. Evil thoughts are set in the front of this black Roll. When God would express the wickedness of the old world, he saith, *Gen. 6. 5. That every imagination of the thoughts of their heart was onely evil continually.* The imagination gives shape to every thing that the minde works upon. The reason of Atheism, is Blasphemy in the thoughts; the reason of worldliness, is some wicked thought that lies hid in the bosome: and therefore saith God, *Isa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.* You must not onely mark your way, but your thoughts: trace every corrupt desire, every inclination; every affection, every transient motion: whatever passeth thorow your hearts in the whole day, call it to an audit, set

set upon the tryal of it. Our thoughts are even infinite, nimble, slippery; and therefore we had the more need to watch them, and to set upon the search of them; and having found of what nature they are, and of what tendencie they are; cherish the good, and check the bad. One evil thought, one sinful cogitation, being uncontrolled, and given way to; O how may it vex and disquiet our hearts, when we come to lie upon our death-beds! As David dealt with his wayes, so do you with your thoughts: *I considered my wayes*, saith he: so do you your thoughts.

4. If you would think of God, and the things of God; then heighten your love to God, and the things of God. Strong affections make strong impressions. and cause great thoughts of heart. A man cannot but think much of that which he loves much, and therefore saith David, in *Psalms 119. verse 97. O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day*: q. d. I do abundantly love thy law: I do love it so greatly, as that I cannot well express how greatly I love it: *O how I love thy law!* and therefore 'tis, that I am so much in the meditation of it. Be sure of it, that our infinite wandrings, and woful trifling away of our golden hours in idle and evil thoughts, is caused very much by our coldness and luke-warmness in our love to God, and the things that are of divine concernment. Would we but prefer God, and the things of God, incomparably before all other things whatsoever: would we once make supernatural and heavenly things our chief portion and

treasure; then would our hearts be chiefly set upon them, and our thoughts mostly run on them. See what our Saviour saith, *Matth. 6. 21. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

5. And then in the last place, to this end, make use of Prayer too. You know that God is both the heart-maker, and the heart-mender: desire him to put your souls into a spiritual frame and temper; to direct your hearts unto the remembrance of his Name. Pray for your selves, as *David* did once for his people, *1 Chron. 29. 18. Oh Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people; and prepare our hearts unto thee.* In like manner, let us pray, *Lord, keep thy Name for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of our hearts, and prepare our hearts unto thee: or as he prays, Psalm 19. 14. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my strength and my redeemer.* Pray that God would raise up your hearts, and ravish your hearts; that you may so meditate upon his Name, that you may have respect unto all his ways.

I should come to give you some Rules or Directions concerning this holy meditation: But of them (God willing) the next time.

Now because circumstances bear such a weight in every action, as that they either make or mar it; before I speak of the form and manner of our thinking upon the Name of God, I shall deliver a word or two concerning the circumstances of Meditation. There are two circumstances to be heeded in this duty.

1. The

1. The circumstance of Time.

2. The circumstance of Place.

I begin with the circumstance of Time. Though it cannot be denied, but that a Christian should have daily converse and communion with God; he should be always ejaculating and raising up of his heart to heaven, saying with *David*, Psalm 35. 4. later part of the verse: *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.* Though he ought to take occasion, even from those things which do occur and offer themselves unto his outward senses, to aspire and climb up to God in his heart; yet without doubt, every Christian should redeem some fit and convenient portion of time, and set it apart from other employments, that so he may solemnly and seriously think upon the Name of God: he must not onely do it occasionally, but he must appoint some time or other on set purpose, that he may the more thorowly discharge this necessary duty: at which time he should concentre, and draw as it were into one point, all the powers and faculties of his soul, and command them to attend this heavenly exercise, as much as may be, without distaction. And I suppose, Beloved, it were no great task, to fetch in the practise of some of the holy men of God this way. *Isaac* went out to meditate at the even-tide, *Gen.* 24. 63. 'Tis conceived, *Isaac* did this usually, though at this time peradventure more earnestly, by reason of that important business he had in hand; which was his marriage. It seems that *Isaac* did ordinarily go forth about even-tide (which was, saith Mr. *Answorth*, at the ninth hour of the day; with us, the third hour in the afternoon, about three of this clock) to meditate. This was

Isaac's set-time for meditation, as (I say) 'tis generally conceived. So *David*; the Name of God, and the Word of God, was his meditation all the day, *Psalms* 119. 97. and in the night, *Psalms* 119. 55. yet there are some texts which lead us to think, that *David* had his set and solemn times for this purpose: amongst others, I will instance onely in that one, *Psalms* 139. 18. the last words of the verse: *When I awake, I am still with thee.* Some indeed refer this to the last resurrection; and give out *David's* meaning to be this: When I arise out of my grave, I shall be still with thee, I shall ever be with the Lord.

But we need not to force the text: as *David* had other set-times to meditate upon God, so the morning was one of them: When I awake out of my sleep, or, as soon as I awake out of my sleep, I am with thee in holy meditation. So that, Beloved, ye are not onely to maintain a constant communion with God in this duty; but there must be some time laid aside on set purpose for this duty.

The second circumstance that I shall speak of, is the circumstance of Place; and here, as I spake of the time, so I may speak of the place for holy meditation: As at all times we should think upon the Name of God, so in all places; not onely in this place appointed for the publick service of God, but in all other places; in your houses, in your shops, and places of trading; at board, and at bed; at home, and abroad. But yet, for preventing of distraction, and considering that Satan is ready to take all advantage

vantages against us, labouring might and main, by outward objects, to distract and divide the faculties of our souls with impertinent or unprofitable thoughts, yea with sinful and corrupt thoughts; therefore I conceive it necessary, that the place where we meditate most seriously and solemnly, should be retired and secret. The devil well knows how neer and familiar earthly things are to our senses, and how remote and far distant heavenly and supernatural things are; therefore he would fain work upon our carnality, by presenting earthly objects, and by them would fain convey to our hearts earthly-mindedness; and so bereave us of the benefit of meditation. So that, I say, to prevent the policy and malice of the devil, 'tis best, whenever we desire in good earnest to set upon this duty, to withdraw our selves into some private place, into our chambers, studies, or closets. What our Saviour speaks concerning the duty of Prayer, we may apply unto the duty of holy meditation: *Matth. 6. 6. When thou prayest, enter into thy closet*: so, when thou meditatest, enter into thy closet; withdraw as much as may be from the noise and clutter of the world; do it as privately and reservedly as may be. I might give you some instances for this too. *Isaac* did it in the field, as you may finde in the text before alledged, *Gen. 24. 63.* he was private in meditation and soliloquie. Upon this passage of *Isaac*, I finde one to have this observation. *Domitian*, saith he, about the beginning of his Empire, usually sequestered himself from company an hour every day; but did nothing the

‘ while, but catch Flies, and kill them with
 ‘ a pen-knife: but *Isaac* sequestred himself from
 ‘ company, to a better purpose; he improved
 ‘ his solitariness for deep meditation and solilo-
 ‘ quie. *David* performed this duty in his bed,
 ‘ *Psalms* 63. 6. and therefore saith he, *Psalms* 4.
 ‘ 4. *Commune with your own heart upon your*
 ‘ *bed.*

And thus have I given you a word or two concerning the circumstances that are to be considered in and about this duty. Before I come to the form or manner of performance, I might speak something of the matter or substance of the duty. But I shall only hint at this, because I have spoken already to this purpose, in the opening of this part of the text, *And thought upon his Name.* That which we think upon, must be the Name of God. A little word, but of large extent. We must think upon all that is possible for us creatures to know of God; think upon his Essence, think upon his Attributes, Wisdom, Power, Justice, Mercy, Infiniteness, Holiness, Omniscience, Omnipresence, &c. We must think upon his Ordinances, Ways, Word, and Worship; think upon his work, whether common to the world, as creation and providence; or as more proper and peculiar to his Church, as Election, Redemption, Justification, Sanctification. Upon these must we think, and whatsoever is comprised under the Name of God.

But I pass by this, and come unto the more particular directions. I desire you to observe these following Rules, in reference unto Meditation.

I. Think

1. Think upon God primarily, chiefly, and in the first place. Let the Name of God have the first-fruits of your thoughts: begin with God in the morning, as *David* did, in the place fore-alleadged, *Psalms 139. 18.* and as the Church did, *Isai. 26. 9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: i.e. I have not onely thought upon thee in my most retired thoughts; but thou hast had my first, as well as my last thoughts; I ended with thee at night, and I began with thee in the morning.* Oh Beloved, as 'tis a sweet thing to close our eyes, so 'tis our duty to open our eyes, and to begin the day with God. I shall not stand upon this, because I spake something to this purpose in the Means. That rule of our Saviour is general, and therefore holds here: *Matth. 6. 33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness:* Let heavenly things or objects have the priority, superiority, and principality in your thoughts. No doubt but 'tis lawful for us to think of our necessary businesses: but we must think of them in their proper place and season; secondarily, subordinately, and in the second place: Be sure that God have the *Primitia* and first-fruits of your thoughts. But in the second place:

2. Think upon the Name of God solicitously and carefully, and with all your might. So much is implied in that word *ζητεῖτε*, *Matth. 6. 33.* The word *seeking* includes pain, toil, and labor; not an idle velleity, or a supine and lazic wish. If we urge the extent of the word, it notes so to require or exact, as doth an importunate disputer

puter in the Schools, or a violent tormentor on the Rack. This Greek word implyeth the same that the Hebrew word *haphabb* doth in my text: it carries with it, as I told you in the opening of this phrase, the intention of the minde. I confess, that with *Martha*, we are apt to trouble our heads about many things, apt to turmoil our spirits with fretting, vexing, carking and corroding cares and thoughts of the things of this life; quite contrary to that Gospel-precept, *Mat. 6. 31. & Phil. 4. 6.* This, I say, we are prone and ready enough unto: Oh that we could but more largely, more affectionately, more carefully and industriously think upon the things of God! This is a duty of the first Commandment; yea, this is that *first and great Commandment*, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy minde, and with all thy might.* This duty of meditation upon the Name of God, requires much earnestness.

3. Practise this duty chearfully, readily and willingly: The worldly man needs not to be invited to minde his profit, the voluptuous man his pleasure, or the ambitious man his honour: these they do naturally; and what men do naturally, that they do freely and willingly. Oh but how many invitations and inducements mu't Christians have to this duty! how averse from it, how backward are we unto it! We can think of any thing more easily and readily, then we can think of God, and the things of God. I beseech you that fear God to consider, that God loves not to strain upon any, neither regards he an involuntary or unwilling service. 'Tis said indeed,

2 Cor. 9. 7. later part of the verse : *God loveth a chearful giver.* And what is spoken of that service, is as true of any other. God loves to see us set upon our duties chearfully, and with a willing minde : this is acceptable and delightful to him, *isa. 1. 19. Psalm 110. 3.* God expects a free and a Princely spirit from his people towards his service : *Exod. 35. 5.* A true worshipper of God is not thrust and driven on by an outward written Law ; but findes a law written in his own heart. They who have felt the day of Divine power, are not acted by humane power, by the coertions and ordinances of men ; they are under no constraint, in this duty of meditation especially, but that of the love of God, and of Christ. If God shall delight in what thou doest, let it be thy delight and recreation to think upon his Name. I must not stand long upon these particulars, because I see the time hasteneth away. Well then, in the fourth place,

4. Think upon God soberly, not thinking to pry into Gods secrets further then he hath been pleased to reveal them, *Deut. 29. 29. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed, belong unto us.* This is one of those places which in the Hebrew is marked with a special note, to the end that we should take special notice of it. As we must not think of our selves beyond sobriety, according to that of the Apostle, *Rom. 12. 3.* so neither must we think of God beyond sobriety, or above what is written of him : if we do, we shall quickly lose our selves, and be swallowed up in a Maze or Whirl-pool of errors. Ye may sooner drain
the

the Ocean with a shell or spoon, then the perfections of God, with our largest understandings: *Job 38.21. Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?* There are secrets in Nature, which were never entered into by Art: the treasures of the snow and of the hail descend upon us; but we cannot ascend into the treasures of them. We cannot enter into natural things; how then shall we enter into spiritual? how shall we enter into, or our thoughts comprehend the God of spirits? *1 Cor. 2.9. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him:* and if the things that God hath prepared for man, are not yet entered into his heart; how can God, who hath prepared these things, enter into his heart? And therefore be modest and sober, keep within the bounds of the Word, in your divinest contemplations.

3. Think of God spiritually. To frame any gross, carnal, or earthly image of God in our mindes; or to represent him to our understandings, by the similitude or likeness of any creature whatsoever; this is plain idolatry, forbidden in the second Commandment. See what God saith, *Deut 4.15, 16, 17, 18.* Nay, this was a chief part of their Hellenism or Gentilism, of whom the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 1.23.* However, this may be very helpful to us in our thoughts of God, to conceive of him as of God in Christ. Christ is, as the author to the *Hebrews* tell us, *Heb. 1.3. The brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.* Christ is as it were the lad-

ladder of ascension, by which we may climb up safely unto God. Doubtless we may fix our mindes upon the humane nature, in which the Godhead dwells bodily, and to which 'tis personally united. And under any other character or resemblance, we may not think of God.

6. Think upon God reverently: We are bid to serve him with fear, *Psalm 2. 11. i. e.* with a holy, filial, and reverential fear. If we do not thus think upon his Name, we take his Name in vain; we defile and pollute his Name. Thus those wicked Priests, spoken of in the beginning of this Prophecie of *Malachi*, are said to despise the Name of God, yea to pollute it: and why was it? why because they thought that any thing was good enough for God, *Mal 1. 6, 7, 8.* Beloved, the Name of God is a great, dreadful, and terrible Name; and therefore we had need to think of it with prepared hearts, and composed affections. While we think upon his Name, let us awe his Name, and dread his Name. But I can enlarge my self no further, the time being past. And therefore, in the last place,

7. Perform this duty constantly: not onely primarily, sollicitously, chearfully, soberly, spiritually, and reverently; but perpetually and constantly. These godly ones here in ~~my~~ text, as they did not confer together onely once or twice, but often; so they often thought upon the Name of God: they did it habitually, it was their usual practice. We should never give over thinking upon the Name of God, until our thinking upon his Name be improved to and for

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for practice. *Hos. 6. 3.* With the Prophet there,
Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord :
i. e. We shall experimentally know the Lord, if
we shall prosecute knowledge, and not con-
tent our selves with measures already attained.

And so much for this Point, and for
this time.

FINIS.

